NATION

Central pollution watchdog failing: SC

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BUSINESS

Didn't receive any Russian oil in three weeks: Reliance

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SPORTS

'ISL to start on 14 Feb, all clubs will participate'

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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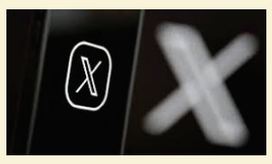
Centre extends deadline for X to report on obscene content



NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The centre has given X an additional time till 7 January to submit a detailed action taken report after it issued a stern warning to the Elon Musk-led social media platform over indecent and sexually-explicit content being generated through misuse of AI-based services like 'Grok' and other tools.

On Friday, the government directed X to immediately remove all vulgar, obscene and unlawful content, especially generated by Grok (X's built-in artificial intelligence interface) or face action under the law. The ministry had also asked the US-based social media firm to submit a detailed action taken report (ATR) within 72 hours of the directive effectively by January.

Sources said X had sought more time, and now it has been asked to submit its report by 7 January. —*PTI*

Land acquisition proof not needed for green nod

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Non-coal mining project developers will not have to show proof of land acquisition as a pre-requisite for environmental clearance now, according to a recent environment ministry memorandum. So far, the ministry required proof of land acquisition. However, the norm was reconsidered following requests that consent from landowners should not be insisted upon at the time of grant of environmental clearance (EC) for non-coal mining projects and the status of land acquisition should not be linked with the grant of the clearance. "After due deliberation the sectoral Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) observed that the request for delinking the consent from landowners at the time of grant of EC for non-coal mining projects, appears to be reasonable," the ministry said. "Based on the inputs received it was observed that insisting on land acquisition documents may not be practical." — ***PTI***

2.89 crore names removed in UP SIR

18% of names deleted from pre-roll list

People search for their names in the draft voter list after the SIR of electoral rolls in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

LUCKNOW, 6 JAN

The draft electoral roll for Uttar Pradesh published on Tuesday after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) removed 2.89 crore voters but retains 12.55 crore, said Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Navdeep Rinwa.

The 2.89 crore voters, or 18.70 per cent, of the 15.44 crore listed earlier could not be included in the draft list due to deaths, permanent migration or multiple registrations, he said. The final electoral list will be published on 6 March.

Opposition parties in UP have criticised the exercise.

UP Congress President Ajay Rai said the time allotted for the SIR exercise was short. "Only one month in a large state like Uttar Pradesh is unreasonable. They gave one month even to a small state like Kerala. Uttar Pradesh should have been given at least five to six months, as was done earlier in 2002–03."

Samajwadi Party {resident Akhilesh Yadav warned the Election Commission about the draft roll in Mainpuri, the Lok Sabha constituency of his wife Dimple Yadav. The Kannauj MP and former UP chief minister said on X, "Before the anger of the voters turns into agitation, the EC should correct the voter list."

However, Rinwa said that the SIR was done fairly.

The CEO said a one-month claims and objections period would begin on 6 January, during which voters can raise objections by submitting Form-6.

Meanwhile in the Supreme Court, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, representing the EC, argued that the Commission has constitutional authority to revise electoral rolls, countering claims from petitioners that only the Central Government holds it. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

SIR BREAKDOWN

THE SIR IN UP SAW A MASSIVE DELETION OF NAMES. HERE'S WHY THE EC SAID IT REMOVED THE NAMES:

2.57 crore voters (14.06%) had permanently migrated or were not available during the verification process.

46.23 lakh voters (2.99%) were dead.

25.47 lakh voters (1.65%) were registered at more than one place.

Spelling error for Amartya Sen

After the TMC said that Nobel laureate Amartya Sen recieved an SIR hearing notice by the EC over discrepancies in the spelling of his name, the EC said he wasn't required to appear. The EC said it had no bearing on his voting eligibility.

A video purports to show JNU students protesting the denial of bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

JNU erupts in protest against PM, HM as Umar & Imam stay in jail

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

A group of JNU students raised controversial slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah inside the university campus after the Supreme Court denied bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 riots conspiracy case recently.

According to a purported video of the protest, which was held on Monday night, slogans condemning Modi and Shah were raised.

According to the letter addressed to the SHO of Vasant Kunj (North), the University's Security Department said the programme was organised around 10pm by students linked to the JNUSU.

The gathering appeared limited to commemorating the 5 January, 2020, incident, with around 30 to 35 students present.

The letter said that the nature of the event changed following a judicial verdict on the bail pleas of Khalid and Imam, after which some participants allegedly raised slogans, which the University termed "inflammatory and objectionable".

Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNSU) President Aditi Mishra said that every year, students hold a protest to condemn the violence which occurred on the campus.

"All the slogans raised were ideological and did not attack anyone personally," Mishra said.

The JNU administration vowed to take the "strictest action" against the sloganeers.

"An FIR has already been lodged in connection with the incident," it said on X. — *PTI*

> **Bail is the rule, jail is the exception.**
> —Supreme Court in 2024
>
> **Snakes are being crushed and the snakelets are screaming.**
> —Kapil Mishra, Law Minister

Shooting near Venezuelan Prez Palace as Delcy takes charge

CARACAS, 6 JAN

Gunfire erupted near the Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas on Monday night shortly after **Delcy Rodriguez** was sworn in as Venezuela's interim President.

It was later reported that guards opened fire on unidentified drones that were part of the Venezuelan security forces' equipment. The shooting began around 8.00 pm local time, with residents reporting automatic gunfire and flashes of tracer bullets in the sky. One official stated, "the situation is under control," emphasising the guards mistakenly perceived the drones as a threat.

Rodriguez was sworn in by her brother, National Assembly leader Jorge Rodriguez.

"I come with sorrow for the suffering inflicted upon the Venezuelan people following an illegitimate military aggression against our homeland," she said with her right hand up. "I come with sorrow for the kidnapping of two heroes."

She had earlier promised to work with the Trump administration after it abducted Nicolas Maduro and his wife on 3 January in a nighttime military attack. —*Agencies*

>>>More on Pages 3, 6

LONGEST SERVING K'TAKA CM

Siddaramaiah equalled D Devaraj Urs' record as the longest-serving Chief Minister of Karnataka on Tuesday to a jubilant crowd in Mysuru ***PHOTO: PTI***

>>>More on Pages 2, 5

HC allows lighting of deepam on Thirupparankundram hill

MADURAI, 6 JAN

The Madras High Court's Madurai Bench on Tuesday upheld a single judge's order allowing for the lighting of a lamp on the Thirupparankundram hill here.

The court also slammed the DMK government's "ridiculous" claim that lighting of the lamp will cause disturbance to public peace.

A Division Bench of Justices G Jayachandran and K K Ramakrishnan delivering the judgment, made it clear that the spot on which the stone pillar (Deepathoon) is located belongs to the Sri Subramania Swamy Temple.

The appellants failed to produce any "formidable evidence" to show that Agama Sastra of Saivites prohibits lighting the lamp at a place, which is not straight on top of the deity in the sanctum sanctorum, the court observed.

"It is ridiculous and hard to believe the fear of the mighty State that by allowing representatives of the Devasthanam to light the lamp at the stone pillar near the top of the hill located within its territory of Devasthanam land, on a particular day in a year, will cause disturbance to public peace. Of course, it may happen only if such a disturbance is sponsored by the State itself. We pray no State should stoop to that level to achieve their political agenda," the bench said.

The Tamil Nadu government indicated that it would move the Supreme Court against the High Court order.

The petitioner, Rama Ravikumar, termed the judgment a victory for the devotees of Lord Muruga. The BJP welcoming the judgment said it was a slap on the face of the DMK government. —*PTI*

Madras High Court upholds order permitting lighting of lamp near dargah on Madurai hill ***PHOTO: X***

Climate activist held for storing excess booze

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Harjeet Singh, a prominent climate activist, was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh excise department for allegedly possessing "excess" liquor, following a search by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). This relates to suspicions over Rs 6 crore in foreign funds misused for promoting narratives aligned with foreign influencer groups. The ED's investigation scrutinises Singh's visits to Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2025 and the funding for these trips.

The agency stated it found 45 litres of liquor exceeding permissible limits at his home and firm that Satat Sampada Pvt Ltd.

The ED claimed SSPL serves as a "front" for channelling foreign funds to further the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FF-NPT) agenda in India.

Singh has been a prominent voice for two decades, has done significant background work on creating a framework for the Loss and Damage Fund — for nations most vulnerable and impacted by climate change — which was set up in Dubai in 2023. Singh has been associated with ActionAid International, Climate Action Network and Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative. —*PTI*

IAF PILOT IN 1971 WAR

Ex-sports minister Suresh Kalmadi dies

PUNE, 6 JAN

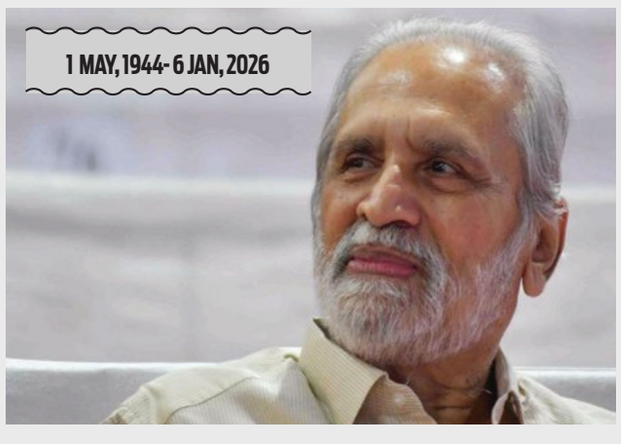
Congress veteran and former Union minister Suresh Kalmadi, known for a multifaceted career that intertwined politics and sports administration, passed away in Pune early Tuesday after prolonged illness at the age of 81, family sources said.

Kalmad breathed his last at around 3.30 am.

One of India's most towering sports administrators in varied roles for over two decades, his command of Indian sports yielded both success and scandal.

He had served as Union Minister of State for Railways and was a former president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Born in Madras in 1944, Kalmadi studied at Fergusson College in Pune, the city he went on to represent in the Parliament.



An alumnus of NDA and an IAF pilot who participated in the 1971 India-Bangladesh war, Kalmadi entered Parliament in 1982 and went on to serve four terms in the Rajya Sabha and three terms in the Lok Sabha from Pune.

After being spotted by Sharad Pawar, he was appointed Pune Youth Congress chief and later developed close ties with Sanjay Gandhi and former prime minster Rajiv Gandhi.

After the Congress split in the late 1980s, Kalmadi stayed with the Indian National Congress and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1982, 1988, 1994 and 1998.

He went on to serve as Union Minister of State for Railways from 1995 to 1996 in the PV Narasimha Rao government. He was the only MoS for Railways to have presented Railway Budget.

In 1997, the Congress did not give him the ticket for Pune Lok Sabha, prompting him to form the Pune Vilas Aghadi. — *PTI*

>>>>More on Page 3

Toddler mauled by stray dogs in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 6 JAN

A two-year-old boy was grievously injured after being allegedly attacked by stray dogs in Belagavi, hospital authorities said on Tuesday. The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon in the Azad Nagar area, they added. The injured child has been identified as Ahmed Ramiz Bisty. According to his family, Ahmed was playing in a narrow lane near his residence when seven to eight stray dogs suddenly pounced on him. The dogs dragged the toddler and bit him repeatedly, inflicting multiple severe injuries across his body.

Hearing his cries, residents rushed to the spot, chased away the dogs, and rescued him. Ahmed was immediately shifted to a private hospital in the city, where he is undergoing treatment. Doctors described his condition as serious but stable. —*PTI*

City cops seize MDMA crystals worth Rs 3.50 cr

BENGALURU, 6 JAN

Two men have been arrested for alleged drug peddling, with police seizing MDMA crystal worth Rs 3.50 crore in the City. The Ashoka Nagar Police Station acted on a tip-off from an informant on 31 December. One suspect was apprehended near the Hindu Cremation Ground on Hosur Road. During questioning, he claimed he and an accomplice procured the MDMA at a low price to sell during New Year celebrations. He reportedly revealed that the drugs were hidden near a grave in the cremation ground. Police seized 2.48 kg of MDMA crystal and a two-wheeler linked to the offence. Further interrogation led to the arrest of another accomplice on 4 January, bringing the total seizure to 3.2 kg of MDMA along with additional evidence. *—PTI*

15 injured in Udupi bus-lorry accident

UDUPI, 6 JAN

Fifteen people were injured after a tipper truck collided head-on with a KSRTC bus in Kundapura, police said. The bus, travelling from Neralakatte to Tallur, was struck by the over speeding truck near Shettarkatte turn late on Monday. Most of those injured were passengers on the bus, including seven students. Three people with serious injuries were admitted to KMC Manipal for advanced treatment, while the others were taken to Kundapura Government and Adarsha hospitals. The tipper driver, Raghavendra, was admitted to Chinmayi Hospital. Two patients remain in critical condition with head injuries, while one has stabilised. Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar visited the hospitals to check on the injured. A case has been registered, and investigations are underway. *—PTI*

As CM equals Urs' record, says will complete 5 years

Siddaramaiah will beat Urs' record of 2,792 days as CM on 7 January

MYSURU, 6 JAN

Siddaramaiah equalled D Devaraj Urs' record as the longest-serving Chief Minister of Karnataka on Tuesday and asserted that he will complete the full five-year term, if the High Command approves.

He also said that he will discuss the much-awaited Cabinet reshuffle with the High Command when they summon him.

Siddaramaiah equalled Urs' record of 2,792 days as Chief Minister and will surpass it on 7 January.

The record comes even amid an alleged power tussle between Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar.

"I have not done politics to break any record; It's only a coincidence. I did not know how many years and days Devaraj Urs served as CM. Today because of the blessings of the people, I have got an opportunity to equal Devaraj Urs's record. Tomorrow it will be broken," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru.

Asked if he will create another record by completing the full five-year term, he said, it has to be decided by the Congress High Command. "I don't know when the High Command will decide."

Asked if he believed they were in his favour, he said, "I have confidence. If I had no confidence, how would I have been the Chief Minister?"

Siddaramaiah reminisced on his political career.

"I became MLA, I got opportunities, I became minister, Deputy Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition, and became the Chief Minister too. I got opportunities, and I have performed the duties," he said.

"Both Urs and I are from Mysuru... He (Urs) was there from 1972 to 1980. I have been CM for two terms from 2013-18 and from 2023 to till now," he added.

Serving people is something that gives happiness to him, he said. "Politics means doing justice for the poor, Dalits, backward, and doing their work," he said.

His supporters celebrated the accomplishment by having feasts featuring dishes of his favourite 'naati koli' (native chicken) and ragi mudde. *—PTI*

DKS WISHES CM LUCK ON COMPLETING FULL TENURE

Bengaluru, 6 Jan

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar wished Chief Minister Siddaramaiah "good luck" after the latter expressed confidence about completing a full five-year term in office. "Let good things happen. I wish him all the best. Good luck," he said. Shivakumar also congratulated Siddaramaiah for equalling the record of Devaraj Urs as the longest-serving Chief Minister of Karnataka. "I wish him success. May God bless him. I pray that God gives him good health and the opportunity to serve the people," the Bengaluru Minister said. Asked about his brother DK Suresh's statement that good days are coming, he said, "All days are good days. Yesterday is past, today is present and tomorrow is future. The day I am talking to you is a good day." —Salar News

Siddaramaiah is a modern-day leader. Any State needs to give good governance, and Siddaramaiah has done so.... Congress will never go away from India & Karnataka.

—G Parameshwara, Home Minister

BJP, JD(S) MOCK SIDDARAMAIAH, CALL HIM 'NEO KING' & A 'FAILURE'

Bengaluru, 6 Jan

The Opposition BJP and JD(S) on Tuesday took a dig at Siddaramaiah for his "failures". There was no reason for people to feel happy about Siddaramaiah becoming the longest serving Chief Minister because of "corruption, bickering, financial crisis in the State government and lack of development work", Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said. "Other than being the longest serving Chief Minister, there is no other achievement of Siddaramaiah". He alleged that there was an influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. On X, the BJP termed Siddaramaiah as "Abhinava Arasu" (Neo King). BJP said during the "Tughlaq darbar", corruption exceeded limits, and farmers suicides have increased. JD(S) too claimed most communal riots happened under him. —PTI

BDA Chairman NA Harris and DyCMDK Shivakumar at a BDA event in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTO: X @INCKARNATAKA*

Change image of BDA this year: DKS on its 50th yr

BENGALURU, 6 JAN

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday called on the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) to change its image for the better as it entered its 50th year.

Speaking at the inauguration of a workshop on governance and grievance redressal for BDA employees, he said, "Change the image of the organisation at least this year. Eradicate its perception as a broker."

"It took me six months to find out, through my own intelligence inputs, about the corruption in the system," he continued. "I am aware of the rot in the system at every stage and I am also aware of what is working well in the organisation. In this backdrop, we have decided to digitise all the documents. Some may not like this but we have to change BDA. The organisation is getting a bad name due to some 10 per cent of the employees who are corrupt."

He said that BDA and the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) are the faces of Bengaluru.

"I am not going to be easy on corruption and I will take strict action against the culprits. The team led by (MLA) NA Harris wants to leave behind a legacy," he added.

He added that the City needs to be planned better.

"Other than some areas like Jayanagara, Malleshwara, Chamarajapet, there are not many planned areas. All of us are fault on this," he added.

He also slammed the previous governments for not developing the City well.

"A peripheral ring road was planned in 2010 and it could have been done in Rs 26,000 crores had they done it then. Due to the delay, it now costs Rs 50,000 crore," he said. *—Salar News*

After plaint, Priyank dubs RSS an impediment

BENGALURU, 6 JAN

IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge on Tuesday lashed out at the saffron organisation, terming it the "biggest impediment" to the nation's growth. He was responding to a defamation complaint was filed against him, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and Youth Congress leader Mohammad Haris Nalapad by an RSS member.

Kharge had earlier sought a ban on the RSS, seeking to precent it from holding rallies on government premises.

"The 'Body of Individuals' is using its stooges to file cases against us, simply because we are raising valid questions on (the finances) RSS. RSS is the biggest impediment to the growth of the Nation," Kharge wrote on X.

Kharge also cited RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement that the organisation operates on donations from its volunteers. Kharge sought clarification on the matter.

Kharge further asked, "When Swayamsevaks purchase uniforms or materials from "local offices", where are these funds accounted for? Who bears the cost of maintaining local offices and other infrastructure?"

"When every religious or charitable institution in India is required to maintain financial transparency, what justifies the absence of similar mechanisms for the RSS?" he added. *—ANI*

Priyank Kharge *PHOTO: ANI*

BJP to campaign Statewide for G RAM G awareness

BENGALURU, 6 JAN

The BJP will soon launch a statewide campaign to spread awareness about the VB-G RAM G, party State President BY Vijayendra said on Tuesday.

The Shikaripura MLA said the decision was taken because the ruling Congress is spreading disinformation about the VB-G-RAM-G.

The Viksit Bharat—Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB—G RAM G) Act was passed by the Parliament recently, replacing MGNREGA.

"The BJP will launch an awareness campaign about the VB-G RAM G. We have formed a state-level team that includes BJP state general secretary Kudachi Rajeev, MPs Kota Srinivas Pujari, Eeranna Kadadi," Vijayendra said in a press conference. He said the idea is the make the information about VB-G RAM G reach every village of the state so that there is no confusion among people. *—PTI*

Govt teacher terminated after beating 3rd grader

RAICHUR, 6 JAN

A guest teacher was suspended after allegedly being a Class 3 student at a government Urdu school allegedly beat a Class 3 at Galag village of Devadurga taluk in Raichur district.

The guest teacher, Harshiya Taskin, allegedly beat a student after becoming angry over the child's inability to read a lesson "properly". The teacher reportedly struck the student with a wire, leaving severe bruises on his back, hands, and legs.

The child, in visible pain, was immediately admitted to the Primary Health Centre in Galag, where he received treatment for his injuries.

Shocked after seeing the injuries on their son's body, the parents and villagers gathered in front of the government school to express their disapproval of the teacher's actions.

"If a teacher, who is supposed to guide and teach children with patience, behaves like a brute, what will be the future of our children? Inflicting such severe physical violence is illegal," the parents said.

The Block Education Officer told Salar News "We've terminated the teacher." *—Salar News*

Multiple courts get hoax bomb threats

MYSURU, 6 JAN

Panic gripped parts of Karnataka on Tuesday after bomb threat emails were sent to the Dharwad Bench of the Karnataka High Court and several district courts, prompting authorities to evacuate the premises, police said.

Judicial officers, lawyers, litigants and court staff were swiftly evacuated, and court proceedings were temporarily suspended. In addition to Dharwad, district courts in Mysuru, Gadag and Bagalkote received similar threats. Bomb disposal squads and sniffer dogs were deployed to conduct thorough searches, but no suspicious items were discovered. FIRs have been registered at the relevant police stations, and investigations are ongoing to trace the source of the emails.

Earlier, Bengaluru's Koramangala passport office also received a bomb threat via email. Police and bomb disposal teams carried out security checks at the office and at the Passport Seva Kendra on Lalbagh Road as a precaution. No suspicious objects were found, and the threat was subsequently confirmed to be a hoax.

A case has been registered at Koramangala police station. *—PTI*

Malaysia state eyes tie up for quantum technology

BENGALURU, 6 JAN

A high-level delegation from Malaysia's Penang state has expressed keen interest in partnering with the state government for developing quantum technology, state Science and Technology Minister NS Boseraju said here on Tuesday.

Quantum technology draws on quantum mechanics and enables new ways of processing information.

He shared the information after meeting the delegation, led by Penang Deputy Chief Minister Jagdeep Singh Deo, at Vikas Soudha.

Deo extended an invitation to Boseraju to visit Malaysia and Penang.

Boseraju highlighted Karnataka's innovations in the irrigation sector and its 'waste to wealth' initiatives, including the KC Valley (Koramangala-Challaghatta) and HN Valley (Hebbal-Nagawara) projects.

The KC Valley project is a State government initiative that uses secondary treated wastewater from Bengaluru's sewage plants to replenish rain-fed tanks and recharge groundwater in the drought-prone Kolar and Chikkaballapur districts.

The HN Valley project is a similar initiative that uses treated wastewater from Bengaluru to replenish lakes and recharge groundwater in Chikkaballapur and Bengaluru Urban and Rural districts.

"Deo appreciated the Karnataka government's initiatives in science and technology. *— PTI*

MULTIPLE POSCO CASES

Bride leaves after learning of husband's 'rapes'

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 6 JAN

A newly married woman renounced her marriage after learning that the groom was accused in several rape cases. She removed her Mangalya in the presence of the groom, her parents and the police personnel.

The woman eloped with the accused Sandeep on Saturday and married him at a temple in Chintamani on Sunday. They were both from Chikkaballapur district. As the couple were returning home, her parents intercepted their car and took them to the Women's Police Station in Chikkaballapura where dramatic scenes unfolded.

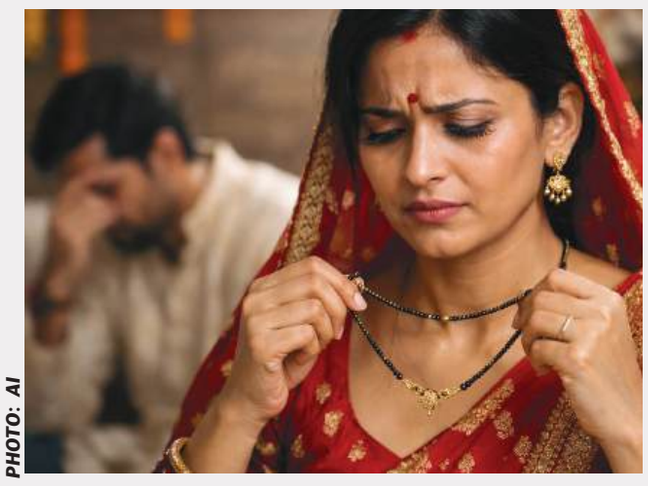


PHOTO: AI

At the station, the newly-wed bride was greeted by another girl who said that she had filed a POCSO case against Sandeep in 2024. The bride's parents also told her about another POCSO case pending against Sandeep at Ramamurthy Nagar station in Bengaluru. They showed her dozens of photographs in which the accused Sandeep was found in a compromising pose with mostly minor girls, said police sources.

Yeshawanth, Inspector, Women's Police Station Chikkaballapur, said there were many pending cases against Sandeep who claims that he works as a front office executive with a reputed company in Chikkaballapura. However, he works as a driver with a private company.

In complete shock, the girl said that she was renouncing the marriage and agreed to go home with her parents. *—Salar News*

HDK is not a serious person: DKS on Ballari violence

BALLARI, 6 JAN

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday said that the Congress party's fact-finding committee report had found out that removal of the Valmiki banner triggered Ballari violence.

At a press conference, he said, "The decision of the local leaders to erect a statue of Maharshi Valmiki was right. The people of the district had welcomed the statue with celebrations from 24 to 29 December. A banner was installed on 1 January about the Valmiki statue. If Janardhan Reddy or Sriramulu had any objections to the community, they should have approached the Corporation Commissioner, police department or the MLAs about the banners. Instead, they have forcibly removed it themselves. Our party workers went to install the removed banner, which is when the violence has happened. The banner was torn under the leadership of Janardhan Reddy and Sriramulu."

He said Janardhan has five police personnel for security and Sriramulu has two. Janardhan has not filed a plaint about any "conspiracy to kill him". He has demanded Z category security, I learnt the Centre issues it, he said.

The Urban Development Department was in charge of the Valmiki statue opening. Leaders from all parties attended it. The statue was sculpted by Arun Yogiraj of Mysuru. But Sriramulu had refused the invite.

"Kumaraswamy has alleged that there were two post mortems, I don't know who gave him that information," he said. Shivakumar visited the family of deceased Congress party worker Rajashekar Reddy.

Asked if it was correct to suspend the SP of Ballari who had taken charge just 7 hours before the violence, he said, "It was Sriramulu who gave me the first information. I called the SP then but he was not a condition to speak." Asked if the government had finalised the dates for inauguration of the statue, he said a decision would e taken after deliberation. *—Salar News*

2 WB men dead; families blame SIR hearing stress

KOLKATA, 6 JAN

Two men died in West Bengal on Tuesday, with families claiming that stress related to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls played a role in their deaths. Malin Roy, 55, from Boro Haldibari, suffered a stroke after becoming anxious over his SIR hearing on 31 December, during which his name was found missing from the 2002 electoral list. Meanwhile, 57-year-old Mohammad Khadem was discovered dead near abandoned police quarters, with relatives attributing his death to severe mental stress from the SIR process. The ruling TMC claimed over 50 lives have been lost due to the "voter-cleansing operation." *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Sonia Gandhi in hospital, condition stable

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi has been admitted to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here after she suffered respiratory discomfort, sources said on Tuesday. At present, she is doing fine, and her condition is "absolutely stable", they said. The veteran Congress leader has been kept under observation by a chest physician. It is a routine admission, but she has this problem of chronic cough, and she keeps coming for check-ups, especially with this pollution in the city, a hospital source told PTI, adding that she was admitted on Monday evening. She had complained of some respiratory discomfort, and upon medical examination, it was found that "her bronchial asthma had been mildly exacerbated" due to the combined effects of cold weather and pollution, the source said. *—PTI*

Phansi Ghar row: Kejriwal, 3 AAP leaders face action

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Delhi Assembly's Privileges Committee has recommended action against four AAP leaders, including former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, for failing to appear before it over the authenticity of a 'Phansi Ghar' on Assembly premises. The Committee said Kejriwal, former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, ex-speaker Ram Niwas Goel, and former deputy speaker Rakhi Birla "wilfully" avoided proceedings. The dispute centres on a renovated section the AAP claims is a British-era gallows, while the BJP calls it a tiffin room. Letters were sent in September seeking comments, but the leaders challenged the Committee's jurisdiction and filed a High Court petition. *—PTI*

Scindia's son suffers injury as car halts suddenly

SHIVPURI, 6 JAN

Mahanaaryaman Rao Scindia, son of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, sustained a chest injury after the driver of his car suddenly braked in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, officials said. The incident occurred on Monday while he was greeting people through the car's sunroof. "Experiencing pain, he was rushed to Shivpuri District Hospital, examined, and discharged after 40 minutes," said district medical officer Sanjay Risheshwar. Mahanaryaman suffered a muscular injury, was given medication, and advised to wear a belt, with a follow-up check scheduled for Tuesday morning. He initially felt no discomfort but later reported chest pain. Mahanaaryaman had been attending a youth conference in Kolaras and had stopped to watch a cricket tournament at a college ground. *—PTI*

EC illegally using apps made by BJP for SIR: Didi

TMC's Derek O'Brien moves SC against SIR 'irregularities'

GANGASAGAR/ NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday escalated her confrontation with the Election Commission (EC), alleging that the poll panel was illegally using mobile applications developed by the BJP's IT cell to conduct the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

The BJP rejected the charge as baseless and politically motivated.

Speaking to reporters before concluding her two-day visit to Sagar Island in South 24 Parganas district to review preparations for the annual Gangasagar Mela, Banerjee accused the EC of adopting what she described as "wrong, unconstitutional and undemocratic" methods in carrying out the revision exercise ahead of next year's assembly elections.

"The EC is resorting to all kinds of wrong moves for conducting the SIR. It is marking eligible voters as dead, and forcing the elderly, ill and indisposed to attend hearings. It is making use of mobile apps developed by the BJP's IT cell for the exercise. This is illegal, unconstitutional and undemocratic. This cannot go on," the chief minister alleged.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses media before leaving for Kolkata after her visit to Sagar Island, in South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Her remarks marked the sharpest charge yet in a rapidly intensifying standoff between the TMC government and the poll panel over the SIR, but has turned out to be politically contentious in West Bengal.

O'BRIEN FILES APPLICATION IN SC

TMC MP Derek O'Brien has filed an application in the Supreme Court alleging arbitrariness and procedural irregularities in the West Bengal SIR.

The application claimed that since the inception of the SIR process in the state, the EC has issued instructions to officers at the ground level through "informal and extra-statutory channels", such as WhatsApp messages and oral directions conveyed during video conferences, instead of issuing formal written instructions.

"The ECI cannot act arbitrarily, capriciously or dehors law, nor can it substitute legally prescribed and set procedures with ad hoc or informal mechanisms," it said. *—PTI*

Cong claims irregularities in Assam's SR

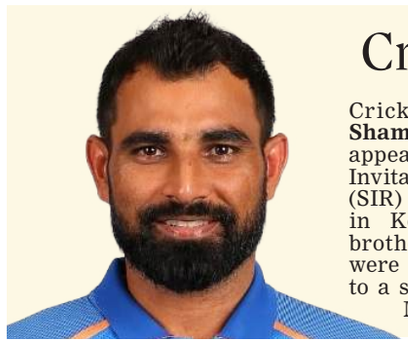
GUWAHATI, 6 JAN

Assam's Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging "serious irregularities" in Assam's draft electoral rolls of, published after a Special Revision (SR).

The senior Congress leader demanded the halt of the finalisation of the rolls until "all irregularities are thoroughly verified and resolved" to ensure the removal of any unauthorised or "unknown" voter entries. Assam has registered a 1.35 per cent increase in the number of voters as per the integrated draft roll, published on 30 December after SR was conducted, with months left for assembly elections. The draft roll reflected a total of 2,52,01,624 electors. During the SR process, 4,78,992 deceased electors and 5,23,680 shifted voters were identified. Another 53,619 multiple entries were detected.

The EC, however, said that these names have not yet been deleted. *—PTI*

Cricketer Shami summoned for SIR hearing



Cricketer **Mohammed Shami** has been asked to appear for a Special Invitation for Registration (SIR) verification hearing in Kolkata. He and his brother Mohammed Kaif were originally summoned to a school in Jadavpur on Monday, but Shami could not attend as he is playing for Bengal in the Vijay Hazare Trophy in Rajkot. The EC has rescheduled his hearing for 9–11 January.

Shami, a voter in Kolkata Municipal Corporation's ward 93 in the Rashbehari constituency, had incorrectly filled out his enumeration form, officials said. Originally from Uttar Pradesh, he moved to Kolkata young, trained under former Bengal captain Sambaran Bandyopadhyay, and played for the state's under-22 team. *—PTI*

Will Trump kidnap PM Modi next: Prithviraj Chavan

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Stating that the US action to capture Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro is matter of grave concern, Congress leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan has said US has no right to kidnap an elected leader and noted that it can happen to any other country tomorrow including India.

"... Will something like what happened in Venezuela happen in India? Will Mr Trump kidnap our prime minister?" Chavan asked.

"Whatever has happened in Venezuela is against the UN Charter. An elected President has been kidnapped and taken to another country. You may not like the policies. America is always fighting the Left political thought. So that may be so, but do you have a right to kidnap an elected President? The UN Security Council will debate exactly the same point," he said. *—ANI*

Ladakh will again become a part of J&K: Minister

SRINAGAR, 6 JAN

"I believe that the day is not far when Ladakh will again become a part of Jammu and Kashmir, a united Jammu and Kashmir.

The government of India does not have any other alternative," J&K minister **Javed Rana** said on Tuesday.

Rana, who holds the Jal Shakti, forest, ecology and environment, and Tribal Affairs portfolios.

Rana warned that any move to carve out a separate state centred on Kanak Mandi in Jammu would set a dangerous precedent.

Recalling that Jammu and Kashmir was once a full-fledged state, Rana criticised the Centre, alleging repeated territorial divisions. "One part was given to Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan. Then Ladakh was separated. What remains is Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding that there had been no demand from the Pir Panjal or former Chenab regions for further division.

- Recalling that Jammu and Kashmir was once a full-fledged state, Rana criticised the Centre, alleging repeated territorial divisions.

On 5 August 2019, the Centre reorganised the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories—Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh—and abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which had accorded special status to the region. *—PTI*

CBI summons Vijay in Karur stampede case

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The CBI has issued a notice to TVK President **Vijay** to appear for questioning on 12 January at the agency headquarters here in connection with the Karur stampede case, officials said.

The CBI has questioned several office bearers of the TVK in connection with the case, they said.

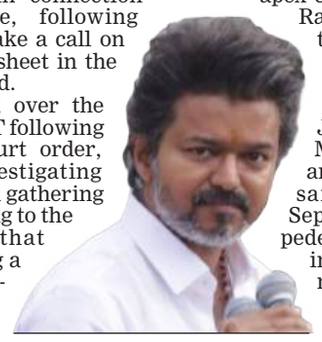
The agency has now decided to call Vijay in connection with the case, following which it may take a call on filing a charge sheet in the matter, they said.

The CBI took over the case from an SIT following a Supreme Court order, and the investigating agency has been gathering evidence relating to the stampede that occurred during a political meeting addressed by Vijay on 27 September in Karur, Tamil Nadu. The incident had left 41 dead and more than 60 injured.

The case was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court on a petition filed by the TVK for an independent probe.

In October, the apex court ordered the director of CBI to appoint a senior officer to take over the investigation.

The court also set up a three-member supervisory committee headed by former apex court judge Ajay Rastogi to monitor the CBI investigation.



A bench, comprising Justices JK Maheshwari and NV Anjaria, said the 27 September stampede has left an imprint in the minds of citizens throughout the country. *—PTI*

HC pushes 'Jana Nayagan' certification plea hearing to 7 Jan

TVK Chief and actor Vijay's last movie, 'Jana Nayagan', before his plunge into politics, is facing a challenge with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) over the censor certificate ahead of its release on 9 January. The movie, which is awaiting approval from the Censor Board, was presented to the CBFC a month ago, but the board cited that the film "hurts religious sentiments," and did not get approval. The filmmakers filed a plea to the Madras High Court. The HC on Tuesday posted the hearing to 7 January. During the hearing Justice PT Asha orally asked CBFC to produce a copy of the complaint. *—Agencies*

A DYNAMIC MAN

How IAF pilot Kalmadi turned sports pioneer

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Resourceful but also hugely controversial and almost always in the line of fire. This was Suresh Kalmadi as one of India's most towering sports administrators in varied roles for over two decades.

The former Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, who breathed his last early this morning in Pune, was a dynamic man, whose command on Indian sports yielded both success and scandal.

Born in Madras in 1944, Kalmadi studied at Fergusson College in Pune, the city he went on to represent in the Parliament.

But much before entering politics or taking up sports administration, Kalmadi served in the Indian Air Force from 1964 to 1974, first as a commissioned pilot and then an instructor before retiring as a Squadron Leader.

Then came the political journey after being spotted by Sharad Pawar. The Maharashtra-man was appointed Pune Youth Congress chief and later developed close ties with Sanjay Gandhi and former Prime Minster Rajiv Gandhi.

Maharashtra DyCM Ajit Pawar pays tribute to late Congress leader and former Union minister Suresh Kalmadi, in Pune, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

After the Congress split in the late 1980s, Kalmadi stayed with the Indian National Congress and was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1982, 1988, 1994 and 1998.

During his tenure as a Rajya Sabha MP, he also served as Union Minister of State for Railways in the PV Narasimha Rao government in 1995.

He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Pune in 1996, but lost the seat in the very next general election before making a comeback by winning the 2004 and 2009 polls.

He brought several top-class events to the country including the 2003 Afro Asian Games, the 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games, the 2010 Commonwealth Games, as well as two Asian Athletics Championships in 1989 and 2013.

As head of the IOA, one of his biggest successes was to revive the National Games.

He managed to organise the National Games at regular intervals and at different venues including Pune, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, and Manipur.

During this time, he managed to pull in international track and field stars for eight meets in Delhi from 1989 to 1998.

He also helped in organising the Pune International Marathon, which is now a regular fixture.

New Delhi also hosted the Asian Athletics Championships in 1989 for the first time in the country's history.

Elected as the Asian Athletics Association president in 2001, he launched Asian Grand Prix Athletics meet in 1990.

Kalmadi was honoured with the Association of National Olympic Committees award in Beijing in 2008 for his role in spreading awareness on Olympic Games.

One of the highlights of his IOA tenure was India achieving a historic breakthrough at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when shooter Abhinav Bindra won the country's first ever individual Olympic gold medal.

In addition, he was also instrumental in starting the Pune International Film Festival, and the Pune Festival during Ganeshotsav. *—PTI*

BJP Chief sorry for 'erase Deshmukh's name' remark

MUMBAI, 6 JAN

Maharashtra BJP Chief **Ravindra Chavan** on Tuesday apologised for his remarks on Vilasrao Deshmukh, after an emotional response from the former chief minister's son and Bollywood actor Riteish Deshmukh.

Addressing party workers, Chavan on Monday said, "On seeing your enthusiasm, (I can say) 100 per cent that the memories of Vilasrao Deshmukh would be wiped out from this city (Latur)."

The remarks drew sharp criticism from the Congress, which accused the BJP of trying to diminish the contributions of a leader who dedicated his life to the state's development. Such statements reflect arrogance of power and ignorance about Deshmukh's legacy, the party said.

Facing flak, Chavan on Tuesday said they were not politically motivated, and apologised to the late leader's son if his comments had caused any hurt.

Vilas rao's son and Congress leader Amit Deshmukh condemned Chavan's comments, saying his father's memories cannot be erased simply because an outsider comes and makes remarks to that effect.

"This is not Maharashtra's culture. I condemn Chavan's remarks," he said.

Vilasrao, hailed from Latur and is remembered for his contribution to the development of the region. He passed away in 2012 after a prolonged illness. *—PTI*

I say with folded hands that the names of those who lived for the people are etched on their minds. What is written can be erased, but you can't erase what is etched

-Riteish Deshmukh, Bollywood actor

MUMBAI CIVIC POLLS

8 candidates move HC, say Speaker denied nominations

MUMBAI, 6 JAN

Eight candidates moved the Bombay High Court on Tuesday, alleging that their nomination forms for the Mumbai civic elections to be held on 15 January were not accepted by the returning officer at the behest of BJP MLA and Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar.

The petition filed by the eight aspirant candidates sought a direction to the State Election Commission and concerned authorities to accept their nomination forms.

The petitioners and several other independent candidates submitted their forms forward nos 224 to 227 with necessary documents and security deposit, but Narwekar forced the returning officer not to accept them, the plea alleged.

These wards fall in Narwekar's Colaba assembly constituency in South Mumbai.

"Narwekar has interfered in free and fair elections by misusing his political power and position as Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha and forced the police machinery to throw the candidates (petitioners) out of the premises of the Election Returning Officer," the petition alleged. The candidates' complaints to the State Election Commission went unheeded, it claimed.

The petition was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad on Tuesday seeking urgent hearing, but the HC said it would be taken up for hearing in due course. *—PTI*

Tumko mirchi lagi toh main kya karoon (what can I do if you feel the sting and get offended)

-Devendra Fadnavis, Maharashtra CM

BJP, allies targeting Waqf Board: Owaisi

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi has accused the ruling BJP and its allies of attempting to undermine Muslim religious institutions through the Waqf Act. Addressing a rally in Nanded on Monday evening, he alleged that the recently passed Waqf Act is being used to "lock mosques" and challenge the ownership of centuries-old dargahs, claiming the government aims to transfer their control to the Archaeological Survey of India. He asserted that Muslims are "not tenants or second-class citizens" and India is their country too. *—PTI*

Bomb scare in Mau rail station, Gujarat High Court

MAU/AHMEDABAD, 6 JAN

Panic gripped Mau railway junction on Tuesday morning after a call claimed a bomb had been planted on the Kashi Express (15018 Down). Security agencies evacuated the train and launched a thorough search, but officials said the threat appeared to be a hoax, and efforts are underway to trace the source of the call.Meanwhile, several courts and collector offices in Gujarat, including the High Court (HC), received bomb threat emails. Four district courts and two collector offices were also targeted. Police and the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) conducted searches at all sites, confirming that no suspicious items were found during the operations. *—PTI*

Refused marriage over caste, Dalit doctor ends life

HYDERABAD, 6 JAN

A 23-year-old Dalit house surgeon at a government medical college in Siddipet district allegedly died by suicide after a man reneged on a marriage promise, citing caste differences. Distressed, she reportedly self-injected a herbicide in her hostel on January 3 and died early the next day. A case has been registered under the BNS and SC/ST Act, and the accused arrested. Police said she met the accused, a senior resident, while doing her internship at the Government Medical College in Siddipet in July last year. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, or SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

Minor UP girl gang-raped by three juveniles

MAU, 6 JAN

Police have detained three boys in connection with the alleged gang rape of a 17-year-old girl in a village in the Ranipur police station area here, an official said. Ranipur Station House Officer Pramod Kumar on Monday said the girl was allegedly gang-raped on Friday by the three juveniles aged between 16 and 17 years. On Saturday, based on a complaint from the girl's family, a case was registered against the accused under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he said. A police team apprehended the three juveniles near Sant Ravidas Temple. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

KITE launches robotics training for Kerala Class 10

THIRU'PURAM, 6 JAN

KITE, the technology arm of Kerala's general education department, commenced a state-wide robotics training programme on Tuesday for all Class 10 students. This initiative aims to empower approximately 4.5 lakh students in government and aided schools, K Anvar Sadath, the CEO of the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE), said. These robotics workshops, led by India's largest student-driven IT network 'Little KITES,' are scheduled to be completed in all schools by 15 January. The program is designed to provide practical experience with the robotics topics introduced in the revised Class 10 IT textbook, helping students prepare for this year's SSLC examinations, he said in a statement. The first session focuses on creating awareness about the importance of robotics and its applications across various fields. Students will be introduced to the fundamentals components of a that is, robotic system: Input (sensors), Processor (microcontrollers), and Output (actuators). *— PTI*

Central pollution watchdog failing: SC

CAQM told to consult experts and submit report on causes of pollution in 2 weeks

- The court criticised the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) its lack of "seriousness" and said it appears to be in no hurry to either identify the causes of the worsening Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi-NCR or find long-term solutions to the problem

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

People make their way across a fog-covered area on a winter morning, in UP's Prayagraj *PHOTO: PTI*

Observing that the central pollution watchdog is "failing in its duty," the Supreme Court on Tuesday rapped it for seeking a two-month adjournment on the issue of temporary closure or relocation of toll plazas on Delhi borders to ease traffic congestion.

The court criticised the Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) for lack of "seriousness" in its approach and said it appears to be in no hurry to either identify the causes of the worsening Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi-NCR or long-term solutions.

Taking serious note of the severe air pollution levels in Delhi-NCR, the court on 17 December issued directions and asked the National Highways Authority of India and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to consider either temporarily closing or relocating the civic body's nine toll plazas at Delhi borders to ease massive traffic congestion.

On Tuesday, a bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi directed the CAQM to convene a meeting of experts in two weeks and submit a report on the major causes of the worsening pollution.

The court directed it to start considering long-term solutions in a phased manner and also consider the toll plaza issue, uninfluenced by the stand taken by various stakeholders.

As the hearing commenced, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the CAQM, referred to the minutes of the meetings with stakeholders and sought two months' time on the issue of toll plazas. The court said the first step is the identification of causes of pollution and refused to grant the request.

It said it will not adjourn the matter beyond two weeks and it will deal with the issue continuously.The court said that instead of coming up with a solution, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has filed an affidavit defending the toll plazas as its source of income. *— PTI*

The gas leak that occurred during workover operations at well Mori Number 5 in the Irusumanda village of Malkipuram mandal *PHOTO: ANI*

ONGC finalises plan to control AP gas blaze

MORI, 6 JAN

The ONGC's senior management has assumed operational control of the gas well blaze here in the Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema district and finalised a comprehensive blowout control plan on Tuesday.

A massive jet fire of up to 20 metres height and 25 metres width erupted around 12:40 pm on 5 January near Mori and Irusumanda villages after a gas leak at an ONGC-owned well, Mori-5, whose intensity has been reduced now.

The gas well is not operated by the Maharatna company but by its Production Enhancement Contractor (PEC) Deep Industries Ltd, an Ahmedabad-based private company.

"The ONGC's senior management including Director (Technology & Field Services) from Delhi along with Crisis Management Team (CMT) experts, have assumed operational control of Mori-5. A comprehensive blowout control plan has been finalised," said a press release.

The ONGC team deployed at the inferno managed to reduce its intensity, which has been raging for more than a day already.

The fire fighters completed the creation of a temporary canal from a nearby irrigation source to facilitate the deployment of high-capacity firewater pumps. Fire pumps have reached the site, and placement activities are in progress, said ONGC.

Besides reducing the flame's intensity, the fire fighters have also managed to alter the flame vertically. *— PTI*

HC ASKS MP GOVT TO STOP WATER SUPPLY FROM CONTAMINATED SOURCES

INDORE, 6 JAN

The Madhya Pradesh High Court issued directions on Tuesday on a plea about the public health emergency caused by the supply of contaminated drinking water in Indore which had resulted in epidemics and loss of life.

On 31 December the court had directed the Indore Municipal Corporation to ensure the supply of clean drinking water to the residents of Bhagirathpura locality in Indore.

During the hearing today a division bench of Justice Vijay Kumar Shukla and Justice Alok Awasthi observed that the incident has damaged the city's image.

On 31 December, the HC directed the State Government and the Municipal Corporation to submit a status report giving the number of hospitalized residents, the treatment being provided and the medical facilities made available. The court also ordered the Corporation to ensure the supply of safe drinking water in all affected areas.

During the hearing today, the counsel for the petitioner submitted that despite the Court's directions, the water remained contaminated.

An Advocate appearing said that a freshwater pipeline project was notified in 2022. However, due to lack of funds, the project was not implemented. *— Salar News*

SC says dogs getting more pleas than human cases

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Supreme Court took note of the number of interlocutory applications being filed before it in the stray dogs case and said that so many applications normally don't come even in cases of humans.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the observations on Tuesday when two lawyers mentioned the stray dogs matter before it.

One of the lawyers said they have filed an interlocutory application in the case.

The bench said the stray dogs matter is slated to come up for hearing before the apex court on Wednesday.

When another lawyer mentioned a transfer petition in the matter, the SC said many pleas would be taken up for hearing on Wednesday, and the bench will hear all lawyers.

A three-judge special bench comprising Justices Nath, Mehta and N V Anjaria is slated to hear the matter on Wednesday.

Taking note of the "alarming rise" in dog bite incidents within institutional areas such as educational institutions, hospitals and railway stations, the SC directed on November 7 the relocation of stray canines to designated shelters after sterilisation and vaccination.

The bench also said the stray dogs so picked up shall not be released back in the place they were picked up.

It directed the authorities to ensure the removal of all cattle and other stray animals from state highways, national highways and expressways.

Recurrence of dog bite incidents within institutional areas, including sports complexes, reflected not only administrative apathy but also a "systemic failure, it said.

It is hearing a suo motu case, over a media report on dog bites leading to rabies, particularly among children, in New Delhi. *— PTI*

SC rejects plea against PMLA, warns the 'rich'

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea from lawyer Gautam Khaitan, who faces money laundering charges linked to the AgustaWestland VVIP helicopter deal, contesting the validity of a provision in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). "Just because I am rich I will challenge the validity of the law... this practice must stop," stated Chief Justice Surya Kant. The court addressed a growing trend of affluent accused challenging laws during ongoing trials, emphasising that all defendants should face trial like ordinary citizens. The legitimacy of Section 44(1)(c), which deals with jurisdiction in money laundering cases, is under review in separate petitions. The court allowed Khaitan's counsel to intervene in those proceedings. *—PTI*

SC grants relief to Ashoka University prof

NEW DELHI, 16 JAN

The Supreme Court has extended its order preventing a trial court from taking cognisance of the chargesheet filed by the Haryana SIT against Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, who was accused over social media posts concerning Operation Sindoor.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi granted the extension after Additional Solicitor General SV Raju informed the court that although the chargesheet was filed in August 2025, no sanction had been given by the Haryana government. Raju requested time to clarify whether the state would consider not granting sanction to resolve the matter.

The SC allowed Raju to seek instructions and scheduled the next hearing six weeks later. The court remarked that it expects Mahmudabad to conduct himself responsibly during this period. "We also don't want that as soon as they decide not to grant sanction, you write any damn thing you want," the bench stated.

Advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Mahmudabad, argued that the case was unfounded. On 16 July, the SC had questioned the Haryana SIT's investigation approach, suggesting it had misdirected itself. The court instructed the SIT to focus on the two FIRs related to the case and complete its report within four weeks. The professor's bail conditions were softened on 21 May, permitting him to express opinions, with curbs on commenting on pending cases. *—PTI*

7 arrested in Rs 200 cr forex racket

PALGHAR, 6 JAN

The Maharashtra Police have unearthed a massive international syndicate that defrauded hundreds of people of around Rs 200 crore by luring them into online forex and gold trading schemes, officials said on Tuesday.

Seven persons, linked to more than 50 criminal cases lodged across several states in India, have so far been arrested in Maharashtra, with the police suspecting the masterminds were operating the racket from outside the country, they said.

The fraudsters targeted victims by gaining their confidence through matrimonial websites and social media platforms before inducing them to invest in fraudulent schemes, Mira Bhayander-Vasai Virar Police Commissioner Niket Kaushik said.

The breakthrough came on 12 November 2025, when a police team, while probing a complaint of fraud, conducted a raid at the Shivsai Residency Lodge and Boarding on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway, he said.Initially, five were apprehended for conspiring to receive illegal funds through a network of bank accounts.

An investigation indicated that the accused contacted individuals on various matrimonial and social media sites, posing as potential partners or high-net-worth investors. *— PTI*

U'khand HC allows WhatsApp notice for cheque bounce

DEHRADUN, 6 JAN

The Uttarakhand High Court has permitted the issuance of summons in cheque bounce cases through email and WhatsApp, moving away from traditional methods. This decision, outlined in a circular by Registrar General Yogesh Kumar Gupta, is part of the newly established Uttarakhand Electronic Process Rules, 2025.

According to the new guidelines, complainants must provide the accused's email and WhatsApp information along with an affidavit affirming the authenticity of this data when filing a complaint. A synopsis in a prescribed format will also be required.

The court noted that no additional procedures under Section 223 of the BNNS will be necessary before issuing a summons. A new software template will automatically calculate the limitation period related to the "cause of action."

To facilitate prompt resolution, the court has introduced an online payment option, enabling the accused to pay the cheque amount and potentially close the case through compounding. As the circular warns, providing false information may result in penal action. *– PTI*

BOY HAD LOST DAD IN J&K

Punjab teen held for sharing info with Pak handlers

CHANDIGARH/AMBALA, 6 JAN

A 15-year-old boy has been apprehended in Punjab's Pathankot for allegedly sharing information about sensitive locations with Pakistani handlers, police said on Tuesday. According to police, the boy was radicalised on a social media platform.

Police had received information that the boy was in contact with and was providing information concerning the country's security to Pakistan military officers, ISI and frontal organisations running terror modules in that country, Pathankot Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Daljinder Singh Dhillon said.

On the basis of this information, the boy was apprehended on Monday and questioned, the SSP told reporters in Pathankot.

SSP Daljinder Singh *PHOTO: ANI*

The SSP said the boy had lost his father, who stayed in J&K, over an year back and suspected that he was murdered. Police investigations did not find that the boy's father was murdered but the boy thought so, the SSP said.

The boy visited social media platforms and fell into the trap of Pakistani agencies, he said.

The Pakistani agents had created a clone of the boy's phone, Dhillon said. The SSP said Pakistani handlers had started taking info from his phone through cloning. He had videograped some important locations. Possibly if his phone was hacked that information could have even gone live, SSP said.

Meanwhile, the Haryana Police arrested a man for spying on the Ambala Air Force Station for Pakistan.The accused, Sunil Kumar had been in contact with a woman on a Pakistani social media platform. The accused was also in touch with a contractor working at the IAF station and frequently visited the premises. He shared photos and videos with the woman through a mobile application, the police said. *— PTI*

CPI ACTIVISTS STAND WITH VENEZUELA

CPI(M) activists in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday held a peaceful protest against the US military operation in Venezuela that led to the capture of President Nicolas Maduro. Activists gathered at a park, chanting slogans and carrying placards denouncing the Trump-led administration. Party's Kulgam MLA MY Tarigami questioned the Centre's statement which called Maduro's capture a matter of "deep concern", and urged it to condemn the aggression instead.
PHOTO: PTI

Metamorphosis of longest serving Karnataka CM

Initially a staunch anti-Congressman, Siddaramaiah joined the rival party after being ousted from Janata Dal (Secular). ***PHOTO:PTI***

- Announcing 2023 polls to be his last, Siddaramaiah went back to his home constituency of Varuna and once again won. Although this may be his last polls, Siddaramaiah to continue in politics.

After days of haggling with his deputy over the 'chair' that threw up some nervous moments for him, Congress veteran Siddaramaiah is now on the cusp of a record - Karnataka's longest serving Chief Minister.

For a man rooted in 'Janata Parivar' for over two decades and known for strident anti-Congress stance in the past, it has been a remarkable turnaround for the 77-year-old, as he equals on Tuesday, fellow Mysurian Devaraj Urs' record of number of days in office.

In his second term as Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah equalled Urs' record with 2,792 days in office, and will be the proud holder of the record from 7 January.

Urs, considered as icon of social justice and land reforms in the State, was a two term CM (1972-1977, 1978-1980).

Siddaramaiah, who is also the only CM after Urs to complete five years, was in the office for 1,829 days in his first term from 13 May, 2013 to 15 May, 2018.

In his second term since 20 May, 2023, he has completed 963 days, but not before supporters of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar tried to throw a spanner by seeking their leader's elevation, in lines with a rumoured 2023 power-sharing formula.

From early 1980s to 2005, Siddaramaiah, who comes from a poor farmer's family, was a die-hard anti-Congressman. But his ouster from JD(S) of former prime minister Deve Gowda brought him to political cross-roads, and made him join the very party he had opposed.

Siddaramaiah went on to become the CM as the Congress' pick in 2013. Those qualities, besides his bluntness, once again catapulted the nine-time MLA to another stint in the top office in 2023.

Siddaramaiah, who has made no secret of his ambition to complete his tenure as Chief Minister, one last time, is hoping to sign off on a "high". He has however given mixed signals about continuing in electoral politics.

Siddaramaiah has the credit of successfully edging out Congress' heavyweights to become the CM - Shivakumar in 2023 and M Mallikarjun Kharge (now AICC President) a decade ago.

After the fractured verdict in 2004, Congress and JD(S) formed a coalition government, with Siddaramaiah, then in JD(S), being made deputy to Congress' N Dharam Singh, who became chief minister. Siddaramaiah holds a grouse, stating that he had the opportunity to lead the state then, but Gowda scuttled his prospects.

Following this, in 2005, Siddaramaiah, a Kuruba - the third largest caste in Karnataka - chose to position himself as a backward classes leader, by spearheading AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits) conventions, coincidentally at a time when the former PM Deve Gowda's son HD Kumaraswamy was seen as a rising star of the party.

Siddaramaiah was sacked from JD(S), where he had earlier served as its state unit chief, with critics insisting that he was removed as Deve Gowda was keen to promote Kumaraswamy.

Siddaramaiah, an advocate, at the time talked about "political sanyas" and even toyed with the idea of going back to his law practice. He ruled out floating a regional outfit, saying he can't muster money power. Both the BJP and the Congress wooed him then.

But Siddaramaiah did not agree with the BJP ideology and joined the Congress with his followers in 2006.

A mass leader, Siddaramaiah has presented 16 State budgets.

A product of 'Janata Parivar', he was influenced by socialist ideals advocated by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, bade adieu to his advocate profession to pursue political career - first as a taluk board member.

Making his debut in the Assembly in 1983, elected from Chamundeshwari constituency in Mysuru on a Lok Dal party ticket, he later joined the ruling erstwhile Janata Party.

He lost 1989 and 1999 Assembly elections, and 1991 Lok Sabha polls from Koppal.

With Congress losing that election, he became the Leader of Opposition and strongly took on the BJP government on corruption, scams and illegal mining.

However, despite being popular because of populist "Bhagya" schemes, Congress faced a defeat in 2018. Siddaramaiah himself lost the 2018 polls in Chamundeshwari in Mysuru to JD(S)' GT Deve Gowda by 36,042 votes.

He, however, won from Badami in Bagalkot district.

After the 2018 polls, Siddaramaiah served as chief of the Congress-JD(S) government's coalition coordination committee, and following the collapse of the coalition government and BJP coming to power, he became the LoP.

Announcing 2023 polls to be his last, Siddaramaiah went back to his home constituency of Varuna and once again won. He had then said this may be his last polls, but will continue to remain in politics thereafter. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

US' decades-long pursuit of Venezuelan oil wealth

After US special forces swooped into Caracas to seize Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and topple his government, US President Donald Trump said the United States will now "run" Venezuela, including its abundant oil resources.

US companies were poised to invest billions to upgrade Venezuela's crumbling oil infrastructure, he said. Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves – outpacing Saudi Arabia with 303 billion barrels, or about 20 per cent of global reserves.

If this does eventuate – and that's a very big "if" – it would mark the end of an adversarial relationship that began nearly 30 years ago.

Yes, the Trump administration's military action in Venezuela was in many ways unprecedented. But it was not surprising given Venezuela's vast oil wealth and the historic relations between the US and Venezuela under former presidents Hugo Chavez and Maduro.

A LONG HISTORY OF US INVESTMENT

Venezuela is a republic of around 30 million people on the northern coast of South America, about twice the size of California. During much of the early 20th century, it was considered the wealthiest country in South America due to its oil reserves.

Foreign companies, including from the US, invested heavily in Venezuelan oil and played a heavy hand in its politics. Venezuelan leaders began asserting more control over their main resource. Venezuela was a key figure in the formation of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1960, and it nationalised its oil industry in 1976.

This negatively impacted US firms like ExxonMobil and has fuelled Trump's claims that Venezuela "stole" oil from the US.

WHY VENUEZUELA IS POOR DESPITE OIL ?

Economic prosperity, however, did not follow for most Venezuelans. The mismanagement of the oil industry led to a debt crisis and International Monetary Fund (IMF) intervention in 1988. Caracas erupted in protests in February 1989, and the military to crush the uprising. Official figures suggest 300 people were killed but the real figure could be 10 times higher.

In the aftermath, Venezuelan society became further split between the wealthy, who wanted to work with the US, and the working class, who sought autonomy. This division has defined Venezuelan politics.

CHAVEZ'S RISE TO POWER

Hugo Chavez began his career as a military officer. In the early 1980s, he formed the socialist "Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement-200" within the army.

Then, after the 1989 riots, Chavez began planning the overthrow of Venezuela's government. In February 1992, he staged a failed coup against the pro-US president, Carlos Andrés Pérez. Another coup attempt failed that same year. Chavez was jailed for two years, but emerged as the leading presidential candidate in 1998.

Chavez became a giant of Latin American politics. He was popular for his use of oil revenue to subsidise government programmes for food, health and education.

Notably, Chavez provided Cuba with billions worth of oil in exchange for Cuban doctors. He also set a precedent of standing up to the US and to the IMF at global forums

THE US IS ACCUSED OF INCITING A COUP

Unsurprisingly, the United states was not a fan of Chavez.

After protests in April 2002, Chavez was briefly ousted in a coup by dissident military officers, who installed new president, businessman Pedro Carmona. Chavez was arrested and the Bush administration recognised Carmona as president.

Chavez swept back into power just two days later and the Bush administration faced scrutiny for its possible role in the aborted coup.

The US denied any involvement. In 2004, newly classified documents showed the CIA was aware of the plot.

US PRESSURE GROWS ON MADURO

Maduro, a trade unionist, was elected to the National Assembly in 2000 and joined Chavez's inner circle. He rose to the office of vice president in 2012 and, following Chavez's death the following year, won his first election by a razor-thin margin.

But Maduro did not have the same level of support among the working class or the military. Venezuela's economic conditions worsened, and inflation skyrocketed.

The successive US administrations continued to put pressure on Maduro. Venezuela was hit with sanctions in both the Obama and the first Trump presidency.

Isolated from much of the world, Maduro's government became dependent on selling oil to China as its sole economic outlet.

Maduro also claims to have thwarted several coup and assassination attempts allegedly involving the US and domestic opposition. US officials have denied any involvement.

One thing is for certain: As long as it has financial stakes the oil-rich country, US involvement in Venezuelan politics will go on. *—The Conversation*

PHOTO:AI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Millions of India's gig workers demand fair treatment and benefits

Millions of informal workers in India are dependent on app platforms, with their livelihoods on the line as they negotiate the country's gig economy.

Raju Kumar works as a delivery worker for Zomato, a leading Indian online food ordering platform, in India's capital New Delhi.

The 27-year-old says he puts in close to 10 hours every day, navigating the city's traffic to deliver orders to customers' doorsteps. He is forced to race congested streets in a battle to complete the delivery on time, and is doing his best to avoid getting any complaints from customers.

Kumar earns about Rs 700 to 900 daily from the gig work.

"But there is no job security here," he told DW.

"All it requires is one customer complaint or a random ID block, and I am out without notice or savings," Kumar added, referring to a practice by platforms like Zomato and Uber where they cut off a worker's account.

This could be motivated by a drop in customers' ratings or by employees violating company policy, but it could also be due to a simple glitch.

Kumar said his account was deactivated for a week last month due to an algorithmic issue, hurting his income to the point of leaving him unable to pay for his rent.

In the western Indian city of Mumbai, the country's business hub, 31-year-old Santosh Pawar is a gig worker employed by Blinkit, a firm focused on delivering groceries. He is also forced to race through the Indian metropolis to meet the company's ten-minute delivery deadlines.

Workers say these ten-minute deliveries pose personal safety risks.

"Last month, I slipped on a waterlogged road and fractured my wrist. The platform offered nothing. There was neither compensation nor medical support... just a message asking when I would be back online," Pawar told DW.

He continued working despite the pain.

"If I do not deliver, we don't eat," said Pawar.

"Our future looks shaky and uncertain. There is no steady work, just endless hustle and family worries," said Priya Sharma, a gig worker in the beauty services sector in New Delhi. "Every canceled order chips away at our dreams. There is no safety net for tomorrow."

So far, India gig economy is growing by absorbing surplus labor from agriculture and other informal sectors.

The NITI Aayog, a premier Indian government think tank, released a policy brief in 2022 hailing the gig and platform economy as a vital job engine fuelled by the rise of digital platforms, widespread use of smartphones and an increasing demand for flexible jobs, among other reasons.

PHOTO:AI

It projects the gig workforce in the world's most populous nation to jump from 7.7 million in 2020-21 to about 23.5 million in 2029-30.

MOUNTING ANGER AND FRUSTRATION

As the number of gig workers rises, anger and frustration are also mounting over work conditions.

Platforms, for instance, have the power to arbitrarily suspend accounts without explanation, cutting off workers' income. When gig employees fall sick or get injured on the job, there is often no insurance or paid leave.

This leaves workers bearing all the risks with platforms firmly in control.

Against this backdrop, some labour groups organized a strike on New Year's Eve, one of the busiest times of the year for deliveries.

They demanded a minimum monthly income for every gig worker, ranging between 24,000 and 40,000 rupees, transparent payment systems, and an end to arbitrary account suspensions.

"Our mission is to challenge the perception of gig workers as merely temporary labor. Instead, we aim to bring them into a united labour movement where their work is recognized with dignity, and they are provided with equal opportunities in a safe and secure working environment," Sanjay Gaba, president of the All-India Gig and Platform Workers Union, told DW.

WARNING OF MORE STRIKES

The Indian government recently came up with new labour laws that mandate a national minimum wage as well as extend social security benefits to the unorganized sector and gig workers.

Prashant Swardekar, president of the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers (IFAT), also urged the creation of a welfare funds. "We want platforms contributing to a welfare fund that provides health insurance, accident coverage, pensions and other protections that workers currently lack," he told DW.

"We just saw a trailer on New Year's Eve. The fight begins now and we will press on in the coming weeks and months," Swardekar said, warning of more strikes to come. *—DW News*

EUROPE FLAYS TRUMP'S GREENLAND PLAN

PHOTO: FREEPIK

US drops number of vaccines needed for children

WASHINGTON, 6 JAN

The US took the unprecedented step Monday of dropping the number of vaccines it recommends for every child -- leaving other immunisations, such as flu shots, open to families to choose but without clear guidance. The administration said that only 11 vaccinations would be mandatory. Vaccines for conditions such as Covid-19, influenza, and rotavirus are no longer universally advised.
The change came after President Donald Trump in December asked the US Department of Health and Human Services to review how peer nations approach vaccine recommendations. *—PTI*

15 killed in flash floods in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 6 JAN

At least 14 people have died following flash floods in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, with search efforts ongoing for four missing individuals. Heavy rainfall on Monday triggered the floods on Siau Island in the Siau Tagulandang Biaro region, said a spokesperson for the local rescue agency. Eighteen others have been reported injured. "We continue to collect data from residents in case there are more missing people." Roads remain obstructed with rocks, mud, and debris, while at least 444 people have been evacuated to local shelters. North Sulawesi governor Yulius Selvanus noted widespread destruction of homes and government buildings, as Indonesia faces peak wet season conditions, increasing flood risks ahead. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

Ramaswamy exits social media after racial slurs

WASHINGTON, 6 JAN

US Ohio Governor candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, told the Wall Street Journal, that he would leave social media this year as a part of his new year resolution. "I plan to become a social-media teetotaler. On New Year's Eve, I deleted X and Instagram from my phone," he wrote. Ramaswamy then said that his campaign team would use the social media platforms his behalf. "There's a fine line between using the internet to distribute your message and allowing constant internet feedback to alter your message. That isn't using social media; it's letting it use you," Ramaswamy wrote. *—ANI*

6.4 magnitude quake rocks Japan; no tsunami risk

TOKYO, 16 JAN

A strong earthquake hit western Japan on Tuesday, but there was no danger of a tsunami and no major damage or life-threatening injuries were reported. The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.2, occurred in Shimane prefecture in northwestern Japan, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. The agency later upgraded the quake to magnitude 6.4. The prefectural capital of Matsue and nearby cities, including some in the neighbouring Tottori prefecture, were among the most strongly shaken. The epicenter was located inland at a depth of about 10km, the agency said, adding there was no risk of a tsunami. JMA officials, however, cautioned residents in the region against the possibility of subsequent powerful quakes for about a week. *—PTI*

Maduro's wife injured during capture: Lawyer

Maduro's wife, Cilia Flores, sustained "significant injuries" during her capture in Venezuela, her lawyer told the federal judge. Flores' attorney, Mark Donnelly, told senior US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein that his client may have sustained a fracture or serious bruising to her ribs, and requires a physical evaluation. The remarks came after Maduro pleaded not guilty and asserted that he the President of Venezuela.

Venezuela to arrest US attack 'supporters'

The Venezuelan government on Monday published a decree declaring a State of External Commotion, granting sweeping powers to the presidency and instructing security forces to detain "any person involved in the promotion or support" of a US attack against the South American country. The decree, dated Saturday, was signed by then-president Maduro.

Switzerland freezes Maduro linked assets

Switzerland on Monday announced the immediate freezing of any Swiss-based assets linked to Maduro, saying that if the assets are found to be of illicit origin, efforts will be made to ensure they "benefit the Venezuelan population", the Swiss Federal Government said.

Danish Prime Minister says US military action would be the end of NATO

After US President Donald Trump abducted Venezuelan leader Nicholas Maduro in a military operation, leaders around the world have been on edge *PHOTO: PTI*

BERLIN, 6 JAN

Several European leaders pushed back Tuesday on US President Donald Trump's comments on an American takeover of Greenland. The leaders issued a statement reaffirming that the strategic, mineral-rich Arctic island "belongs to its people."

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom joined Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in defending Greenland's sovereignty in the context of Trump's comments about Greenland, which is a self-governing territory of the kingdom of Denmark and thus part of the NATO military alliance.

Frederiksen said on Monday that an American takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of the NATO military alliance.

"If the United States chooses to attack another NATO country militarily, then everything stops," Frederiksen stated. Stephen Miller, the White House Deputy Chief of Staff, said on Monday that Greenland should be part of the US in spite of Frederiksen's disapproving statement.

> "If the United States chooses to attack another NATO country militarily, then everything stops," Danish Prime Minister Frederiksen stated.

"The President has been clear for months now that the United States should be the nation that has Greenland as part of our overall security apparatus," Miller said.

After US President Donald Trump abducted Venezuelan leader Nicholas Maduro in a military operation, leaders around the world have been on edge. Trump and his staff, however have taken the opportunity to brazenly threaten several other countries.

Trump has insisted that Washington needs Greenland for its "national security," saying, "lets talk about it in 20 days," a timeline that has upped the pressure.

"Greenland is covered with Russian and Chinese ships all over the place," Trump said. Miller wondered during his interview Monday whether Denmark is able to assert control over Greenland.

"What is the basis of their territorial claim," Miller said. "What is their basis of having Greenland as a colony of Denmark?"

However, it was not necessary to consider whether the US was contemplating an armed intervention, he said.

Greenland Prime Minister Jens Frederik Nielsen insisted that the country was not like Venezuela, stressing that they are in fact willing to cooperate with the US.

However, Frederiksen asserted that Trump "should be taken seriously" when he talks about wanting Greenland. *—PTI*

COLOMBIA VOWS TO TAKE UP ARMS IF US ATTACKS

BOGATA, 6 JAN

Colombian President Gustavo Petro said on Monday that he would "take up arms" amid threats from Trump's

Trump recently told reporters that Colombia was "very sick too (like Venezuela)" and is "run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the US".

He added that Petro "has cocaine mills and cocaine factories" but "is not going to be doing it very long," as he hinted at US military intervention.

Petro responded on X, saying ""If they [the US] bombs, the campesinos will become thousands of guerrillas in the mountains. And if they detain the president which a large part of the country loves and respects, they will unleash the 'jaguar' of the people".

He added that "I swore not to touch a weapon again ... but for the homeland I will take up arms again."

Colombia is the largest producer of cocaine, but there is no evidence to link Petro to the factories or mills. *—Agencies*

MEXICO DOWNPLAYS TRUMP'S THREATS OF INTERVENTION

MEXICO CITY, 6 JAN

The Mexican government and analysts discounted the likelihood of unilateral US military action against Mexican drug cartels, despite threats from Trump.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum's administration has been complying with Washington's demands and the economic ties between the two countries are vital, they say.

Sheinbaum downplayed the possibility of US military action Monday. "I don't see risks (of that)," she said. "There is coordination, there is collaboration with the US government."

"I don't believe in (the possibility of) invasion, I don't believe even that it's something they are taking seriously," she said. "Organised crime is not taken care with (foreign military) intervention."

However, "the US does not function under rational logic," Pérez Ricart, an analyst said. "At this moment all possibilities are open, including those unimaginable a year ago." *—PTI*

Cuba says India 'vital for global balance', calls for unity

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Cuban Ambassador to India Juan Carlos Marsan Aguilera on Monday said the world must unite to stop the US from acting unilaterally, slamming the "criminal " and "terrorist" military operations in Venezuela that "violates United Nations Charter and international law". He said India could play a pivotal role.

Aguilera emphasised that no single nation can stop the US and called for the world to unite to counter US's "madness" in international policy.

"There is a role of India as a voice of the Global South could be strengthened in the future. We need India as a big country in order to make the necessary balance that the world needs," the ambassador said. He highlighted how India supported Cuba through the US' 33-year blockade, while condemning American leaders for saying that Latin America was Washington's "backyard".

"It's time to unite all voices," Aguilera said. "We have the United Nations... We have now the BRICS.". *—PTI*

35 killed in Iran protests; Khamenei likely to flee

DUBAI, 6 JAN

The death toll in violence surrounding protests in Iran has risen to at least 35 people, activists said Tuesday, as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is reportedly planning to flee to Russia, sources told the Times.

The death toll came from the US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which said more than 1,200 people have been detained in the protests, which have been ongoing for more than a week.

It said 29 protesters, four children and two members of Iran's security forces have been killed. Demonstrations have reached over 250 locations in 27 of Iran's 31 provinces,

The semi-official Fars news agency said that near 250 police officers and 45 members from the Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force have been hurt during the demonstrations.

However, Iran's government has offered no overall statistics or information about the unrest.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian assigned the country's interior ministry to form a special team for a "full-fledged investigation" in Ilam province, where videos showed security forces firing at demonstrators.

However, Khamenei, who has been struggling to revive Iran's economy, is reportedly planning to flee to Russia with a close circle of up to 20 aides and family. This comes as Israeli media reported that the US was planning an intervention in Iran.

US President Donald Trump had said Washington was "locked and loaded" if Iran "shot protesters" who are demonstrating against the falling economy.

On Tuesday, USD 1 traded at 1.46 million rials. *—Agencies*

Over 1,200 protesters detained *PHOTO: X @SENTDEFENDER*

Curfew lifted in Nepal's Birgunj as tensions ease

KATHMANDU, 6 JAN

Nepal authorities lifted the curfew in Birgunj, which borders India, on Tuesday following improved conditions post-communal violence. The curfew, imposed on Monday after violent protests sparked by a TikTok video, was relaxed at 3.30pm following an all-party meeting. Parsa Chief District Officer Bhola Dahal stated, "We have decided to lift the curfew as consensus reached between the communities has improved." The agreement requires future demonstrations to seek permission in advance. A Permanent Harmony Mechanism will be established to maintain communal peace and recommend legal actions as necessary. *—PTI*

Lebanese soldiers check buildings hit by an Israeli airstrike in Sidon, Lebanon, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel to tag West Bank Palestinians with e-bracelets

JERUSALEM, 6 DEC

Israeli army plans to introduce an electronic monitoring system to enforce movement restrictions in the occupied West Bank. Security forces would be able to fit individuals with electronic bracelets to track administrative order compliance.

Orders already bar suspects in the West Bank from entering designated areas or contacting specific individuals. The new plan introduces measures allowing Israeli forces to monitor violations. The army said that removing or tampering with monitoring device would be a criminal offense.

The use of electronic monitoring was abolished for Israelis by Defence Minister Israel Katz in 2024, but it remains in force for Palestinians. Israeli legal aid group Honenu quoted a lawyer, describing the policy as an "undemocratic move" and by an "oppressive regime."

ISRAEL HITS LEBANON

Israel's air force struck areas in Lebanon on Monday, including the country's third-largest city. This before Lebanon's army commander is scheduled to brief the government on disarming Hezbollah along the border with Israel. *—Agencies*

SHARIF OSMAN HADI ASSASINATION AFTERMATH

13 CHARGESHEETED FOR HADI'S 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED' MURDER

DHAKA, 6 JAN

Hadi, 32 *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

Bangladesh police on Tuesday said student leader Sharif Osman Hadi was killed in an act of "political vengeance" linked to the now-banned Awami League, as formal charges were filed against 17 people in the case. Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch said Hadi had openly criticised the Awami League and its student wing, the Chhatra League, through public rallies and social media, angering party leaders and activists. Investigators concluded that the murder was politically motivated.

Hadi, 32, a spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, rose to national prominence during the July–August 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government. He was shot in the head on 12 December, while campaigning in Dhaka for the 12 February, elections. He was flown to Singapore for treatment but died on 18 December.

Police said the alleged shooter, Faisal Karim Masud, was linked to the Chhatra League. Another accused, Taizul Islam Chowdhury Bappi, allegedly helped suspects escape. Twelve people have been arrested in the case so far. *—PTI*

Demonstrators in Dhaka chanted 'Why is the murderer free while my brother is in the grave?' *PHOTO: FB/ Inqilab Moncho*

HADI LOYALISTS SEEK WORK PERMIT BAN FOR INDIANS IN BANGLADESH

DHAKA/NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Slain student leader Sharif Osman Hadi's party - Inqilab Moncho - on Tuesday launched a rally in Dhaka, demanding cancellation of work permits of all Indians residing in Bangladesh and bringing all the alleged culprits behind Hadi's killing to book before the 12 February general elections. As part of its four-point demand, Moncho sought the repatriation of the alleged killers who, it claims, have taken refuge in India, which New Delhi has denied. During the march, demonstrators chanted "We will not let Hadi's blood go in vain," and "Why is the murderer free while my brother is in the grave?" *—PTI*

ANOTHER HINDU BUSINESSMAN KILLED IN BANGLADESH

DHAKA, 6 JAN

Moni Chakraborty was killed at Charsindhur Bazar *PHOTO: X*

A 40-year-old Hindu man, owner of a grocery shop, has been murdered by unidentified attackers with a sharp weapon in Bangladesh's Narsingdi city, according to a local media report.

The latest incident took place on Monday night, hours after reports of a Hindu businessman, who was also the acting editor of a newspaper, was fatally shot in the head by unidentified men in Jessore district of Bangladesh.

The grocery shop owner Moni Chakraborty was attacked and killed at Charsindhur Bazar in Palash Upazila around 11 pm on Monday, Bagladesh-based bdnews24 news portal reported. He is the third Hindu businessman to be killed in recent weeks.

Palash Police Station chief (OC) Shahed Al Mamun said Moni had been running the grocery shop at Charsindhur Bazar for a long time. Moni had been returning home after closing his shop on Monday night when, yet, unidentified attackers struck him with a sharp weapon, causing him to collapse on the spot, according to official report. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Rupee rises by 12P, closes at 90.18 against USD

MUMBAI, 6 JAN

The rupee snapped the four-day losing streak and appreciated 12 paise to settle at 90.18 (provisional) against the American currency on Tuesday, tracking a decline in the US dollar index. Forex traders said weak domestic equity markets and geopolitical tensions between the US and Venezuela capped sharp gains for the domestic unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 90.22 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 90.08-90.25 before settling at 90.18 (provisional), up 12 paise from its previous close.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent lower at 98.21 after US ISM Manufacturing PMI came in below expectations. *—PTI*

Juniper Green Energy secures Rs 2,039 cr funding

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Juniper Green Energy on Monday said it has raised Rs 2,039 crore in debt financing from global and domestic lenders, including NaBFID, HSBC, DBS, Barclays and Aseem Infrastructure, to support the development of new renewable energy projects.

The firm also expanded its non-fund-based limits with Federal Bank and Axis Bank. This funding follows a Rs 1,739 crore debt raise from IREDA in August 2025.

NaBFID has provided Rs 566 crore for a 90 MW wind project in Gujarat, while HSBC extended Rs 408 crore for a 75 MW solar-wind hybrid project in Maharashtra, marking its first greenfield financing for Juniper. DBS and Barclays sanctioned medium-term loans, and Aseem extended long-term debt for another hybrid project. *—PTI*

Turtlemint Fintech set to file Rs 2,000 cr IPO

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Insurtech firm Turtlemint Fintech Solutions Ltd is set to file updated draft papers with Sebi within the next two weeks as it prepares to launch its Rs 2,000-crore initial public offering (IPO).

Sources said on Tuesday that the company is targeting a launch by April.

Preliminary IPO papers were filed last September and approved by Sebi in December to proceed with this public issue.

Turtlemint's platform has processed over 90 crore claims for 1.2 crore customers through a network of 5 lakh advisors and partners with more than 40 insurers, covering nearly 65 per cent of India's life and general insurance market. In 2021, PB Fintech, which operates Policybazaar and Paisabazaar, tapped the markets with a Rs 5,710-crore IPO. *—PTI*

India auto retail sales rise 7.71% in 2025: FADA

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

India's vehicle retail sales rose 7.71 per cent in 2025 to 28.16 million units, up from 26.14 million in 2024, helped by GST 2.0, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Tuesday.

Passenger vehicle sales increased 9.7 per cent to 4.48 million units, while two-wheeler sales grew 7.24 per cent to 20.30 million.

Three-wheeler retail rose 7.21 per cent to 1.31 million units and commercial vehicle sales climbed 6.71 per cent to 1.01 million. FADA President CS Vigneshwar said demand was subdued until August but picked up sharply from September after GST rate cuts improved affordability. He added that EV adoption increased across segments and overall sentiment remains positive heading into 2026. *—PTI*

Didn't receive any Russian oil in three weeks: Reliance

The firm says no deliveries expected in Jan

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Reliance Industries Ltd, the operator of the world's largest single site oil refining complex and till recently India's biggest buyer of Russian oil, on Tuesday said it has not received any Russian barrels in almost three weeks and none are expected in January.

On 20 November, 2025, Reliance had said it has halted the use of Russian crude at its export-only refinery in Jamnagar, Gujarat, as the company moves to comply with European Union sanctions.

Prior to that, Reliance was India's largest buyer of Russian oil, which it processes and turns into fuel, such as petrol and diesel, at its giant oil refining complex at Jamnagar.

The complex is made up of two refineries -- one SEZ unit from which fuels are exported to the European Union, the US, and other markets, and an older unit that primarily caters to the domestic market.

The European Union -- a big market for Reliance -- has imposed wide-ranging sanctions targeting Russia's energy revenues, including measures that restrict the import and sale of fuels produced from Russian crude oil.

To comply with these, Reliance had stopped processing Russian crude oil at its only-for-exports (SEZ) refinery.On Tuesday, it called a Bloomberg report claiming "three vessels laden with Russian oil are heated for Reliance's Jamnagar refinery as "blatantly untrue".

RIL SHARES DOWN OVER 4 PC

Shares of Reliance Industries ended over 4 per cent down on Tuesday and were instrumental in dragging the benchmark equity indices lower.

The blue-chip stock edged lower by 4.42 per cent to end at Rs 1,507.70 on the BSE.

During the day, it dropped 5 per cent to Rs 1,497.05.

The company's market valuation eroded by Rs 94,388.99 crore to Rs 20,40,290.90 crore in a single day. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India imported €144B Russian oil since Ukraine war

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

India imported about 144 billion euros' worth of crude oil from Russia since the start of the Ukraine war, a European think tank said on Tuesday, estimating the Kremlin's cumulative earnings from global oil sales since February 2022 at around 1 trillion euros.

India has been the second-largest buyer of Russian oil behind China, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

China bought Euro 210.3 billion worth of Russian oil since the start of the Ukraine war in February 2022, and another Euro 42.7 billion worth of coal and Euro 40.6 billion worth of gas.

China's total buy from the beginning of the war until 3 January, 2026, was Euro 293.7 billion.

India, on the other hand, bought Euro 162.5 billion worth of fossil fuels - Euro 143.88 billion worth of oil and Euro 18.18 billion worth of coal - from Russia, CREA said.

The European Union spent Euro 218.1 billion on buying Russian fossil fuels - Euro 106.3 billion in oil, Euro 3.5 billion on coal and Euro 108.2 billion on gas.

"As of January 2026, Russia has earned 1 trillion euros and counting from global fossil fuel sales since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, revenue that continues to fund displacement, destruction, and death in Ukraine," CREA said.

In response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, G7 countries (the US, the UK, Canada, Japan, Italy, France and Germany) and the EU have imposed sanctions and export controls against Russia. *—PTI*

Trent shares slump over 8%

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Shares of Trent tanked over 8 per cent on Tuesday morning trade after the Tata group's retail firm's revenue growth in the third quarter ended 31 December failed to cheer investors.

The stock tumbled 8.32 per cent to Rs 4,060.65 on the BSE.

At the NSE, it cracked 8.34 per cent to Rs 4,060.

The stock was the biggest laggard among the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty firms during the morning trade.

Trent Ltd on Monday reported a 17 per cent growth in standalone revenue to Rs 5,220 crore in the third quarter ended 31 December.

As of 31 December, 2025, the company's store portfolio included 278 Westside, 854 Zudio (including 4 in the UAE) and 32 stores across other lifestyle concepts, it added.

For the nine months ended 31 December, 2025, standalone revenue was Rs 14,604 crore against Rs 12,368 crore in the year-ago period, up 18 per cent, the filing said. *—PTI*

GOLD SURGES RS 1,100 TO RS 1.41L PER 10G AMID FIRM GLOBAL TRENDS

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Rising for the fourth straight day, the gold price on Tuesday jumped by Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,41,500 per 10g, tracking firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold prices in the national capital increased by Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,41,500 per 10g, the All India Sarafa Association said.

"Gold extended its gains on Tuesday, supported by a softer US dollar and dovish comments from Federal Reserve officials, which reinforced market expectations for potential interest-rate cuts in the coming months," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver prices also witnessed robust buying in the bullion market. The white metal continued its rally for the third consecutive day by surging Rs 7,000 to Rs 2,51,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes).

In the international market, spot gold went up by $11.45, or 0.26 per cent, to $4,460.49 per ounce. "Spot gold is trading with a gain at around $4,460 per ounce, driven by the geopolitical risk escalation as the US captured and removed the Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro," Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities, Mirae Asset ShareKhan, said.

Spot silver also strengthened in the trade, rising by $1.75, or 2.28 per cent, to USD 78.36 per ounce. *—PTI*

BANK FRAUD CASE: BAIL GRANTED TO AMTEK GROUP EX-CHAIRPERSON

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to former Amtek Group chairperson **Arvind Dham** in a money laundering case related to Rs 27,000 crore bank fraud.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and Alok Aradhe set aside a Delhi High Court order which had denied bail to him.

Justice Aradhe, who was sitting in a bench led by Justice PS Narasimha, pronounced the verdict, saying the court has allowed the appeal of Dham in the case.

The Delhi High Court had denied bail to Dham on 19 August last year, saying premature release could risk undermining efforts to secure accountability.

"With the advancement of technology and Artificial Intelligence, economic offences such as money laundering have emerged as a serious threat to the financial system of the country. These offences pose a significant challenge for investigating agencies, given the complex and intricate nature of the transactions and the involvement of multiple actors," the high court had said.

The high court added that a meticulous and thorough investigation was essential to ensure that innocent persons were not wrongfully implicated and that the actual offenders were brought to justice. *—PTI*

Adani Ent sells Rs 1,000 cr bond issue in 45 mins

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) witnessed a rapid sell-out of its Rs 1,000 crore public issue of non-convertible debentures (NCDs), which was completely subscribed within 45 minutes of its launch, as per stock exchange data. The initial base issue of Rs 500 crore was fully taken up in a mere 10 minutes, and the total subscription, including the greenshoe option, surpassed Rs 1,000 crore in under an hour.

The bond issue, which opened on Tuesday and is set to close on January 19, 2026, offers an effective yield of up to 8.90 per cent per annum. The NCDs will be listed on BSE and NSE and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Rated 'AA-' with a stable outlook by ICRA and CARE Ratings, these NCDs present competitive yields when compared to similarly rated debt and fixed deposits, inviting retail investors to engage in India's infrastructure growth.

Proceeds from at least 75 per cent of the funds will be directed towards repaying existing debt, with the remaining allocated for general corporate purposes. AEL continues to expand its infrastructure projects, including significant undertakings like the Navi Mumbai International Airport and the Google-Adani AI data centre campus in Visakhapatnam. *—PTI*

Sensex, Nifty fall for 2nd day amid geopolitical tensions

MUMBAI, 6 JAN

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the second consecutive day on Tuesday, tracking intense selling pressure in market heavyweights Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid geopolitical tensions and renewed concerns about potential US tariff hikes.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 376.28 points, or 0.44 per cent, to settle at 85,063.34. During the day, it tanked 539.52 points, or 0.63 per cent, to 84,900.10.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 71.60 points, or 0.27 per cent, to end at 26,178.70.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent tumbled 8.62 per cent after the Tata group's retail firm's revenue growth in the December quarter failed to cheer investors.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Reliance Industries cracked 4.42 per cent, while ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, InterGlobe Aviation, and HDFC Bank were also among the laggards.

On the other hand, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, and State Bank of India were among the gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent, and midcap dipped 0.24 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, energy tanked 1.71 per cent, oil & gas (1.22 per cent), services (1.07 per cent), capital goods (0.63 per cent), realty (0.28 per cent) and power (0.23 per cent).

BSE Healthcare jumped 1.38 per cent, BSE PSU bank (0.52 per cent), consumer durables (0.43 per cent), IT (0.37 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (0.35 per cent).

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 36.25 crore on Monday after a day's breather, according to exchange data. Domestic institutional investors, however, bought stocks worth Rs 1,764.07 crore. *—PTI*

BUDGET 2026

Rice exporters seek budget support to boost competitiveness

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) on Tuesday urged the government to provide budget sops in the 2026 Budget, such as tax incentives, interest subsidies and freight support, to boost export competitiveness amid sustainability concerns. India accounts for 40 per cent of global rice trade, exporting 20.1 million tonnes to over 170 countries in 2024–25 fiscal year.

In a proposal to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Garg sought sustainability-linked tax and investment incentives tied to water-saving and low-emission farming practices, alongside measures to encourage a shift towards higher-value rice varieties. He also requested a 4 per cent interest subvention on export credit, prioritizing MSMEs, alongside 3 per cent road and rail freight support. Further demands included the timely disbursal of RoDTEP duty remissions and a one-time waiver of retrospective tax claims linked to the previous 20 per cent export duty.

"Rice exports remain a strategic economic asset supporting farm incomes, rural employment and the external sector," IREF President Prem Garg said, adding that sustained leadership in the staple strengthens India's economic resilience and diplomatic leverage. *—PTI*

SAYS PMI REPORT

Services sector hits 11-month low in Dec

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

India's services sector growth moderated in December, with the rates of expansion in incoming new work and output reaching their slowest pace in 11 months, as indicated by a monthly survey released on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index dropped from 59.8 in November to 58.0 in December, marking the slowest rate of expansion since January.

A score above 50 indicates expansion, while below 50 denotes contraction.

"While India's service sector continued to perform well in December, the retreat in several survey indicators...may suggest a moderation in growth heading into the new year," remarked Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Companies reported improved external demand, specifically from Asia, North America, the Middle East, and the UK, with new export orders increasing significantly.

De Lima noted, "What bodes well for the outlook is the benign inflation environment...thereby boosting sales and creating more jobs."However, business sentiment fell to its lowest level in nearly three-and-a-half years amid market uncertainty and exchange rate concerns.

The HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index also fell, revealing a reduction in private sector output growth. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

'Rising AI chip costs to hike Galaxy S26 prices'

SEOUL/LAS VEGAS, 6 JAN

Samsung's Galaxy S26 is set to launch next month, but rising chip costs are creating pressure ahead of the debut. Samsung co-CEO and mobile chief Roh Tae-moon said the high demand for AI infrastructure has led to "one of the harshest pricing situations in memory," as memory and application processor prices spike, affecting smartphone pricing strategies.

The Galaxy S26 introduces Samsung's 2-nanometer Exynos 2600 chip and AI-powered Galaxy AI features, serving as a key test of the company's vertically integrated semiconductor and foundry model. Beyond hardware, Samsung plans to double the number of Galaxy devices with Galaxy AI features from 400 million to 800 million units by the end of 2026, strengthening its AI ecosystem across devices.

The company emphasized privacy and governance, aiming to make AI a "true companion" for users. Samsung's hybrid AI model keeps personal data on-device whenever possible, using cloud-based intelligence selectively for speed or scale, balancing performance and privacy.

The announcement comes amid growing global debate over security, ethical AI use, and privacy in the rapidly evolving AI era. *—Agencies*

Netherlands drop 2 players for Davis Cup tie vs India

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

The Netherlands have left out their top-ranked singles players Tallon Griekspoor and Botic van de Zandschulp in their four-member squad for the Davis Cup Qualifiers tie against India in Bengaluru on 7-8 February. Griekspoor, the Dutch No.1 and ranked 25 in the world in singles, and Van de Zandschulp, who is now 75th, were notable omissions from the team. The Dutch challenge will instead be led by Jesper de Jong, ranked 71 in singles, along with Guy den Ouden, 158th. The India-Netherlands tie will be played at Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association Stadium. India will be led by Sumit Nagal (ranked 275) and Dhakshineswar Suresh (521). Karan Singh (466) is the third singles option for the hosts. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Anahat enters British Junior Open squash final

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Top-seeded Indian Anahat Singh registered a fine win over Egypt's Malika El Karaksy in the semifinals to storm into her maiden women's under-19 final at British Junior Open squash here. The 17-year-old, winner of 12 PSA Tour titles, secured a 11-8, 11-7, 11-9 win over Malika in just 28 minutes. Anahat will meet European junior champion and second seed Lauren Baltayan of France. This is Anahat's ninth British Junior Open final across age-groups, as she aims to become only the second Indian to win the U-19 title after Joshna Chinappa in 2005. Meanwhile, Aryaveer Dewan, the second seed in the boys' U-17 category, went down in the semifinals to Egypt's Philopater Saleh (3/4) 9-11, 5-11, 7-11. *—PTI*

Cricketer Goud's dad reinstated as cop after 13 years

BHOPAL, 6 JAN

Pacer Kranti Goud's father Munna Singh, who was suspended from constable's job in 2012, has been reinstated in the police department, Madhya Pradesh Sports Minister Vishwas Sarang said. Singh, who served as a constable in the Madhya Pradesh Police, was suspended in 2012 for alleged negligence during election duty. The matter was pending for the past 13 years. During the felicitation ceremony held recently after the Indian women cricket team's historic victory in the World Cup, Sarang had assured Kranti Goud, the state's talented cricketer, that her father's job would be reinstated, the minister said. *—PTI*

Rosenior leaves Strasbourg, to manage Chelsea

STRASBOURG, 6 JAN

Liam Rosenior confirmed his exit from French club Strasbourg on Tuesday and strongly hinted he will be the next Chelsea coach. Rosenior has been praised for turning Strasbourg, which is part of the same ownership group as Chelsea, into a force in French soccer after a seventh-place finish last season. Rosenior told a press conference in Strasbourg he has an agreement with Chelsea but has not signed a contract. "I was given permission to speak to one of the biggest football clubs in the world ... who are Club World Cup championsm," he said. "It's an honor for me to be associated with a club like that. Now, on that day, it looks like I will be the next manager of that football club." The 41-year-old Rosenior has never coached in the Premier League. Chelsea last week parted company with Enzo Maresca, who spent 18 months in charge. *—PTI*

'ISL to start on 14 Feb, all clubs will participate'

NEW DELHI, 6 JAN

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday announced that the Indian Super League, which was on pause due to lack of a commercial partner, will start on 14 February.

The ISL will feature all 14 clubs. The I-League, which was also on pause, will be held "around the same time" with all 11 clubs in participation.

"There was lot of speculation regarding ISL but today govt, football federation and 14 clubs, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal included had a meeting and we have decided that ISL will start 14 February. All clubs will participate," Mandaviya announced.

Joining him at the long-awaited resolution table was under-fire All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Kalyan Chaubey, who took over the explaining part after the Minister's announcement.

The ISL will feature 91 matches on home and away basis, the logistics of which are still being worked out.

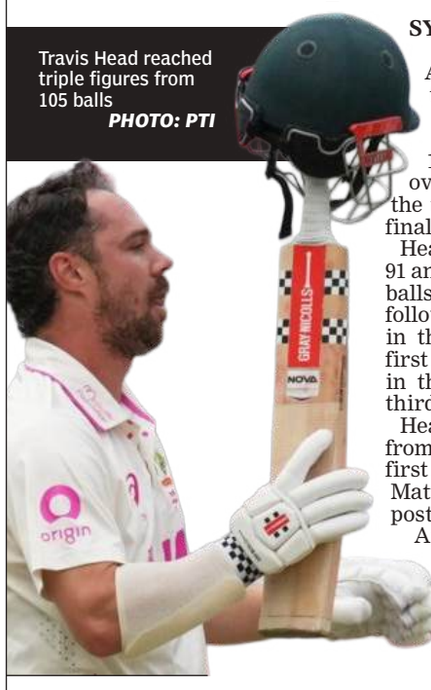
The I-League will be a truncated event with 55 matches. "A Rs 25 crore central pool has been made for only the conduct of the ISL. 10 percent of this fund will come from AIFF, 30 percent was to come from a commercial partner but since we don't have on right now the AIFF will pitch in with that contribution," Chaubey said.

"In all, the AIFF will give Rs 14 crore for ISL and about 3.2 crore for I League till we find a commercial partner," he added.

Chaubey said a Governing Council Board will be formed to manage the Leagues eventually and it will be "empowered to take all commercial decisions." *—PTI*

Head & Smith put Aus in control

At stumps, Aus was 518-7 in reply to England's first innings of 384



Travis Head reached triple figures from 105 balls
PHOTO: PTI

SYDNEY, 6 JAN

A stylish third century of the series by Travis Head and Steve Smith's first propelled Australia to a 134-run first-innings lead over England by stumps on the third day of the fifth and final Ashes Test.

Head resumed on Tuesday at 91 and was out for 163 from 166 balls, a masterful innings to follow his match-winning 123 in the second innings of the first Test at Perth and his 170 in the second innings of the third Test at Adelaide.

Head reached triple figures from 105 balls, becoming the first Australian opener since Matthew Hayden in 2002-03 to post three centuries in an Ashes series. The 32-year-old left-hander reached the milestone with the 17th boundary of his innings.

Smith was 129 not out at stumps, elevating a relatively disappointing series with the bat. His previous highest score in the series was 61 in the first innings at Adelaide. He reached his century from 166 balls with 11 fours and a six.

Australia's Steve Smith celebrates after scoring a century during play on day three of the fifth and final Ashes cricket Test between England and Australia in Sydney
PHOTO: PTI

The century was Smith's 13th in Ashes tests, the 37th of his career and his fifth at the Sydney Cricket Ground, moving him up to sixth on the all-time list of most test centuries.

At stumps, Australia was 518-7 in reply to England's first innings of 384.

Beau Webster was unbeaten on 42 and had put on 81 runs with Smith for the eighth wicket, expanding Australia's lead.

"It was a really nice day today with a couple of nice partnerships," Smith said. "Hopefully, we can put a little partnership together, get up over a 200 lead, and the wicket starts to play a few more tricks.

"I just love batting here, obviously it's my home deck. I know the ground really well and when I get in here, I really like batting here," he said. *—PTI*

J&K wins first BCCI title, U-16 lifts Vijay Merchant Trophy

SURAT, 6 JAN

The Jammu and Kashmir Under-16 team clinched the Vijay Merchant Trophy Plate Group title, it's first-ever BCCI crown, after defeating Mizoram by an innings and 182 runs on the third day of the final here on Tuesday.

J&K won the four-day match with one day to spare.

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated the J&K U-16 cricket team on winning the Vijay Merchant Trophy for the first time.

J&K took a first innings lead of 300 runs, piling up 400 all out in 95.1 overs, in reply to 100 all out made by Mizoram, who batted first.

Captain Smagey Khajuria made 102 off 174 balls for J&K with the help of 15 fours and one six while Athrav Sharma scored 92 not out off 137 balls, smashing 17 fours and one six. In Mizoram's first innings also, Sanil and Jaskaran had taken three wickets apiece. *—PTI*

Malaysia Open: Lakshya in 2nd round, Malvika out

KUALA LUMPUR, 6 JAN

India ace Lakshya Sen made a fine start to the new season, advancing to the men's singles second round with a hard-fought win over Jia Heng Jason Teh of Singapore at the Malaysia Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old from Almora, who won the Australian Open and also registered a final finish at Hong Kong last season, took 70 minutes to get past world No. 21 Teh 21-16 15-21 21-14 in a thrilling opener.

A 2021 world championships bronze medallist, Lakshya, currently ranked World No. 13, will next face either sixth seed Christo Popov of France or Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong.

In women's singles, Malvika Bansod, returning after a six-month layoff due to a left knee injury, however, suffered a 11-21 11-21 loss to seventh seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand, a former world champion in the opening round.

Later in the day, Ayush Shetty, who won the US Open Super 300, will take on Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, the Paris Olympics bronze-medallist.

Indian men's doubles pair of experienced M R Arjun and 22-year-old Hariharan Amsakarunan will face Japan's Hiroki Midorikawa and Kyohei Yamashita. *—PTI*

Kabaddi player killing: 1 nabbed, hunt on for 6

LUDHIANA, 6 JAN

An accused has been arrested, while a hunt has been launched for six others after a former kabaddi player was shot dead in the Punjab district, police said on Tuesday.

Gagandeep Singh alias Baba, 36, was shot dead near the grain market in Manuke village of Jagraon on Monday due to suspected rivalry over his support to another kabbadi player.

The assailants then drove to the victim's home and asked his family to pick up his body from the crime spot.

This was the fourth such incident in four days in the state. Police said the accused led by Gursewak Singh alias Motu intercepted Gagandeep and his friend, fellow kabaddi player Ekam, and opened fire. The accused had a rivalry with Ekam and held a grudge as Gagandeep had taken a stand in his support. The murder followed a scuffle between the two sides, after which the accused returned armed.

Gagandeep sustained three bullet injuries and was declared dead on arrival at hospital. *—PTI*

VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Aman propels Hyd to beat Bengal 352/5

Aman Rao Perala hit an unbeaten 200 off 154 balls to guide Hyderabad to 352/5 against Bengal in the Vijay Hazare Trophy at Rajkot
PHOTO: X/RAJASTHANROYALS

RAJKOT, 6 JAN

US-born Aman Rao underlined his prowess as a big hitter with a scintillating unbeaten double century to propel Hyderabad to a commanding 352 for 5 against Bengal in a Group B match of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Tuesday.

The 21-year-old Rao, who was signed by Rajasthan Royals at the IPL auction, smashed 12 fours and 13 sixes en route to his 200 not out from 109 balls, achieved in just his third List A appearance.

It was the second double century of this edition of the tournament, after Odisha's Swastik Samal had struck 212 against Saurashtra last December.

Sent in to bat, Rao tore apart a Bengal bowling attack featuring Mohammed Shami (3/70), Akash Deep (0/78) and Mukesh Kumar (0/55), scoring 120 of his runs off the trio with a display of power and class.

Rao put on 104 runs for the opening wicket with Rahul Singh (65) and later added 87 runs with skipper Tilak Varma (34).

He brought up his double hundred in style, smashing a six off the final ball of the innings. *—PTI*

- Aman Rao, who was signed by Rajasthan Royals at the IPL auction, smashed 12 fours and 13 sixes en route to his 200 not out from 109 balls, achieved in just his third List A appearance

ICC T20 Rankings: Harmanpreet up 2 spots, Deepti loses top spot

DUBAI, 6 JAN

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur on Tuesday moved up two spots to reach 13th position in the latest ICC Women's T20I ranking for batters, following her match-winning knock in the fifth and final game against Sri Lanka in Thiruvananthapuram.

India won the game by 15 runs, making a cleansweep for the five-match series which concluded on 30 December.

Harmanpreet smashed 68 off 43 deliveries to bag the Player of the Match award and moved towards the top 10.

Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma continued to hold on to their third and sixth spots respectively as Australia's Beth Mooney extended her stay at the top.

Jemimah Rodrigues, however, slipped out of the top 10, and is placed 12th.

Deepti Sharma lost the top spot in the bowling rankings, as her return of one for 28 in the fifth T20I was not enough to stop Australia's Annabel Sutherland's climb to the top.

Deepti has one rating point less than Sutherland's 736 as the Australian fast-bowling all-rounder regained the No 1 position, which she first attained in August 2025 when Pakistan spinner Sadia Iqbal had similarly conceded the top spot to her.

The bowling rankings also saw Indian left-arm spinner Shree Charani advance five places to 47th. *—PTI*

Australian Open prize money hits record high

MELBOURNE, 6 JAN

Australian Open prize money has increased by 16 per cent on last year to a record total for the tournament starting 18 January.

The prize is set at 111.5 million Australian dollars (US$75 million), up from 96.5 million Australian dollars in 2025. Women's and men's singles champions will win 4.15 million Australian dollars ($2.8 million), a 19 per cent increase. Prize money for the qualifying tournament will increase by 16 per cent and all main draw singles and doubles players will get a minimum 10 per cent increase. *—PTI*

KKR NOT OBLIGATED TO PAY

Mustafizur unlikely to get any compensation

KOLKATA, 6 JAN

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman is unlikely to receive any financial compensation after being released by Kolkata Knight Riders on the instructions of the BCCI, despite having no role in what led to the termination of his contract.

Mustafizur was bought by KKR for Rs 9.20 crore at the IPL auction following bids from Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals. The Indian Board didn't specify the reasons for its decision and merely stated that it was necessitated by "the developments all around".

In a retaliatory move, the Bangladesh Cricket Board has demanded the shifting of their T20 World Cup games from India to Sri Lanka.

While the move has triggered debate over the player's rights, sources say the existing insurance framework leaves little room for compensation.

"The salaries of all IPL players are insured. For foreign international players, normally the franchise pays if he is injured. Normally up to 50 per cent is paid from insurance. It is better for India's injured centrally contracted cricketers who normally get paid by the BCCI," an IPL source in the know of things told PTI.

- Since Mustafizur's release is not due to a cricketing reason, KKR are not contractually bound to pay him

However, since Mustafizur's release is not due to a cricketing reason, KKR are not contractually bound to pay him.

"It is unfortunate but Mustafizur doesn't have much option but to take a legal route and that too IPL comes under Indian law jurisdiction. No overseas cricketer would want to go through this or take the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) route," the source said.

The BCB has also withdrawn Mustafizur's No Objection Certificate to participate in the IPL, which further weakens his case.

"The Indo-Bangladesh political scenario is way more fluid than Indo-Pak and it can change next year, so why would one take the risk of legal recourse," the source added. *—PTI*